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BASIL
WOLVERTON

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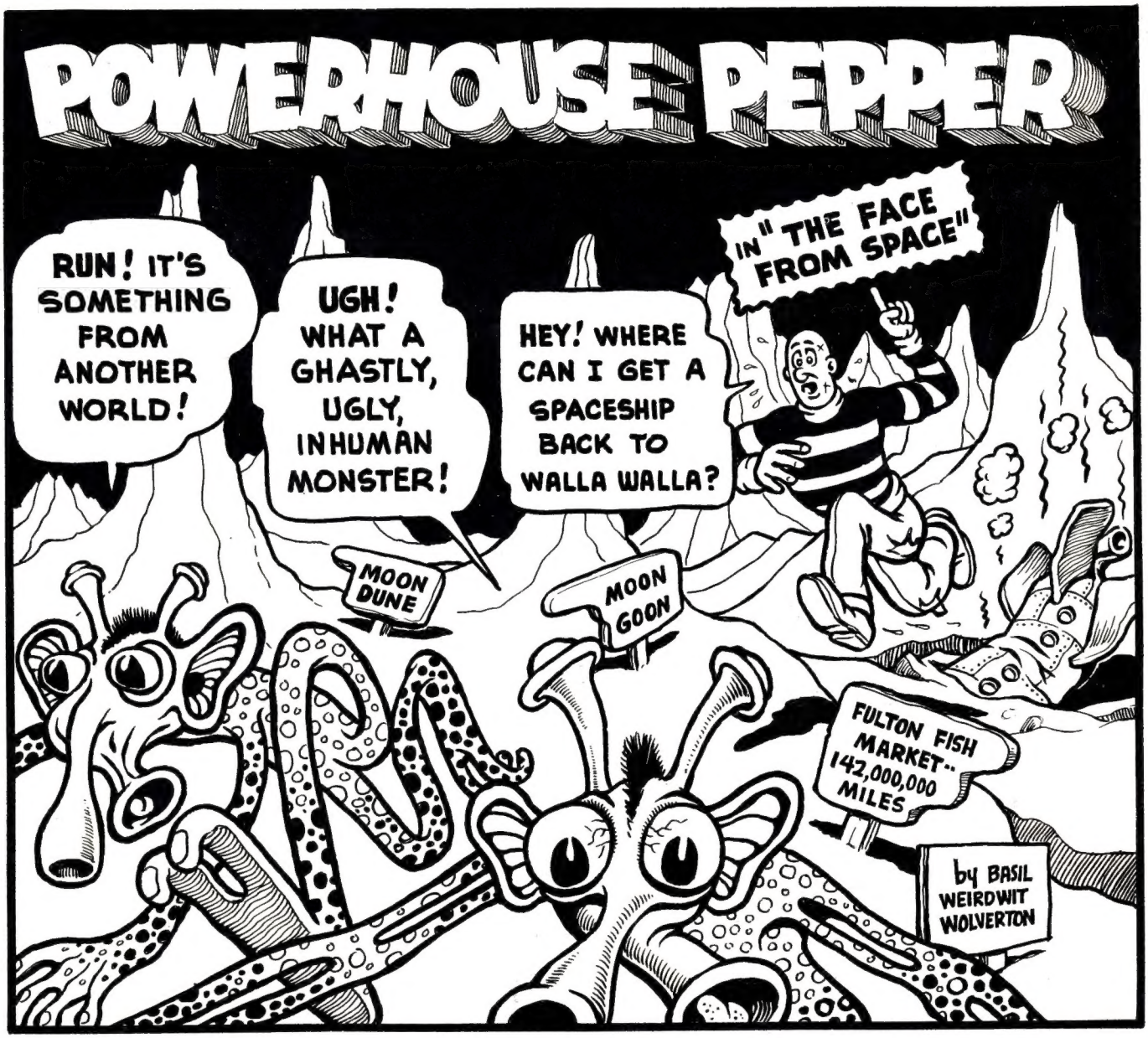
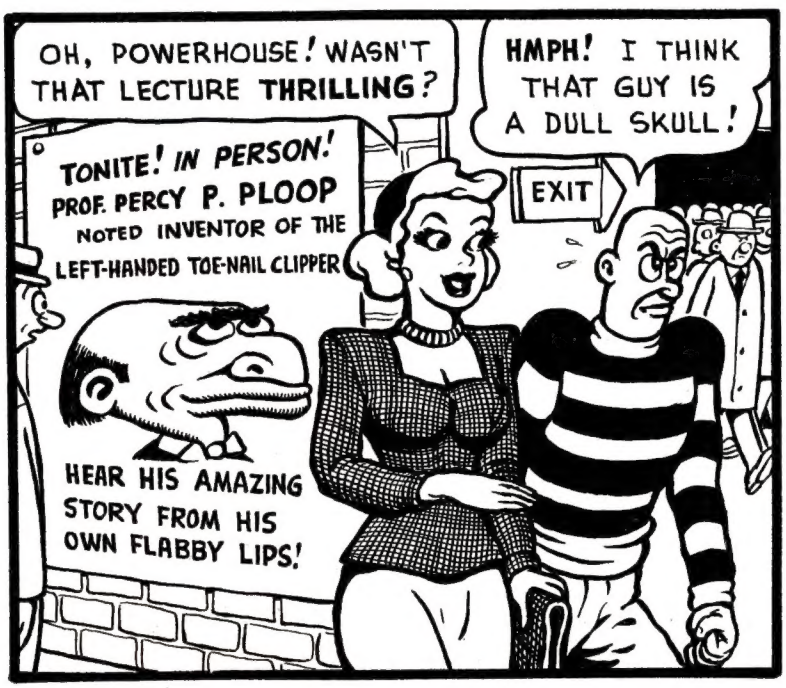
This issue is the second and concluding volume of our two-part Basil Wolverton set; the first was Graphic Story Magazine #12.

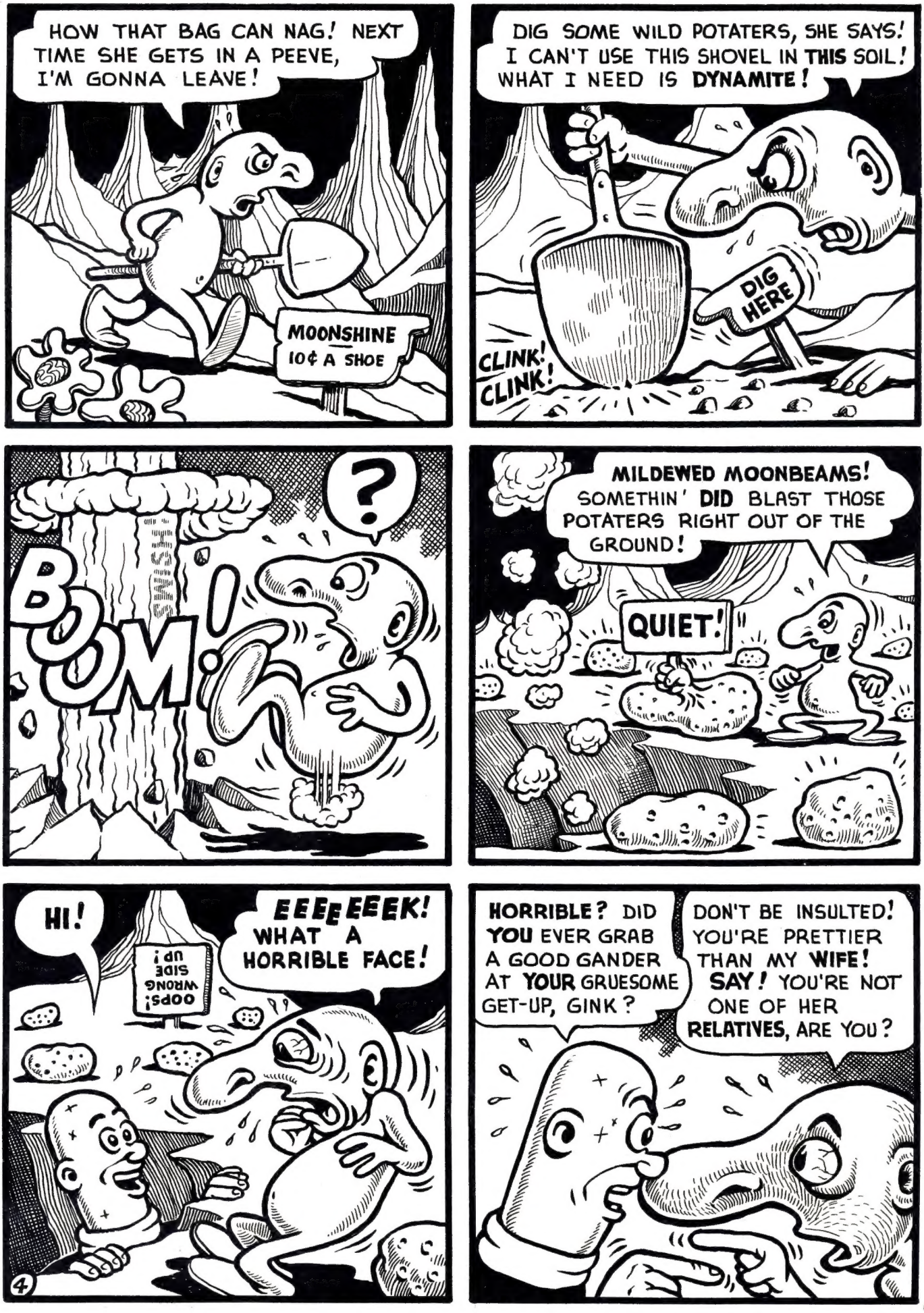

POWERHOUSE PEPPER
RUN! IT'S SOMETHING FROM ANOTHER WORLD!
UGH! WHAT A GHASTLY, UGLY, INHUMAN MONSTER!
HEY! WHERE CAN I GET A SPACESHIP BACK TO WALLA WALLA?
IN "THE FACE FROM SPACE"
MOON DUNE
MOON GOON
FULTON FISH MARKET.. 142,000,000 MILES
by BASIL WEIRDWIT WOLVERTON


OH, POWERHOUSE! WASN'T THAT LECTURE THRILLING?
HMPH! I THINK THAT GUY IS A DULL SKULL!
TONITE! IN PERSON! PROF. PERCY P. PLOOP NOTED INVENTOR OF THE LEFT-HANDED TOE-NAIL CLIPPER
HEAR HIS AMAZING STORY FROM HIS OWN FLABBY LIPS!
EXIT

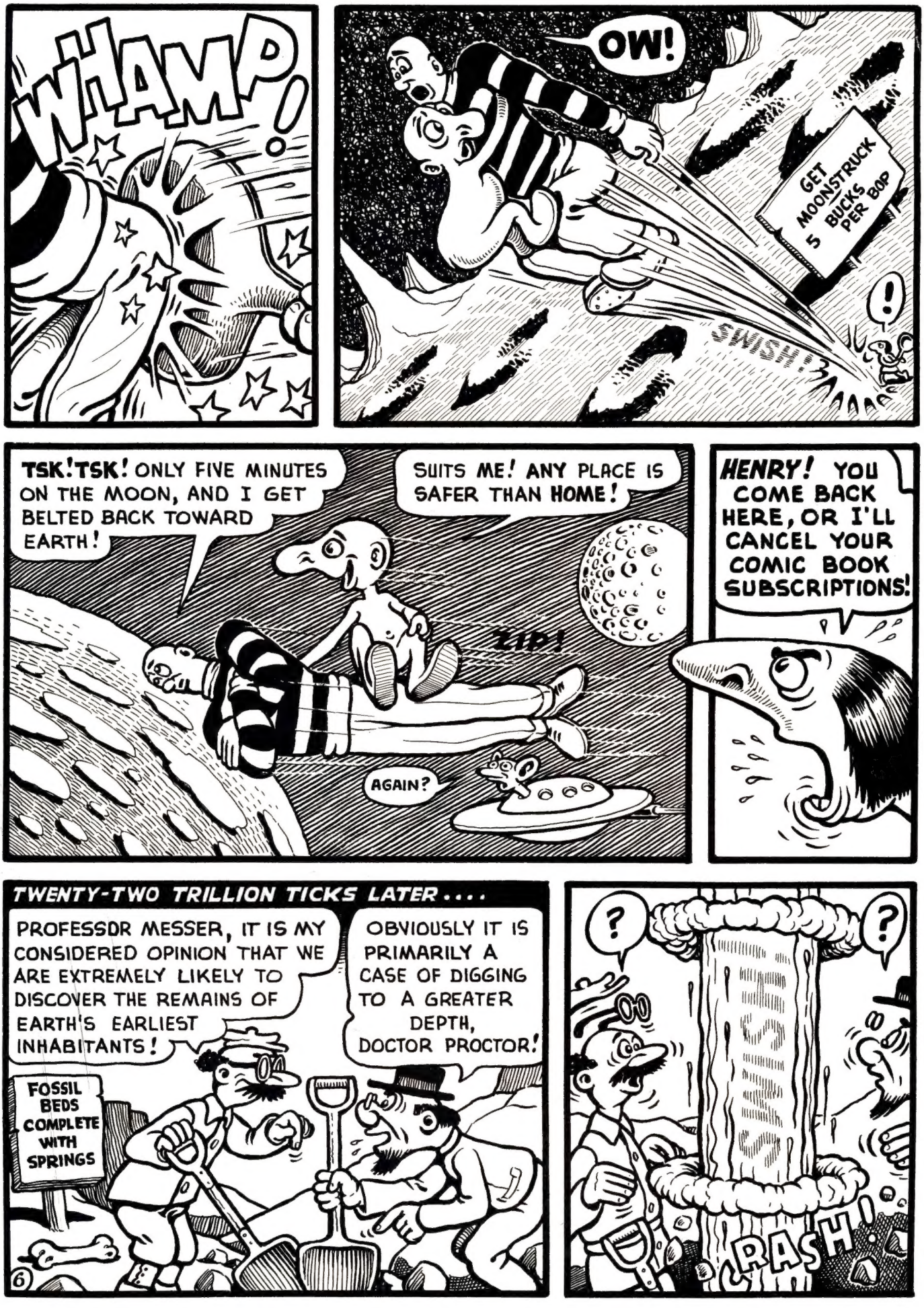
YOU HAVE NO APPRECIATION OF ACCOMPLISHMENT! YOU'RE ALL MUSCLES AND NO MIND! DON'T BOTHER TO TAKE ME HOME, YOU GNOME-DOME!
?

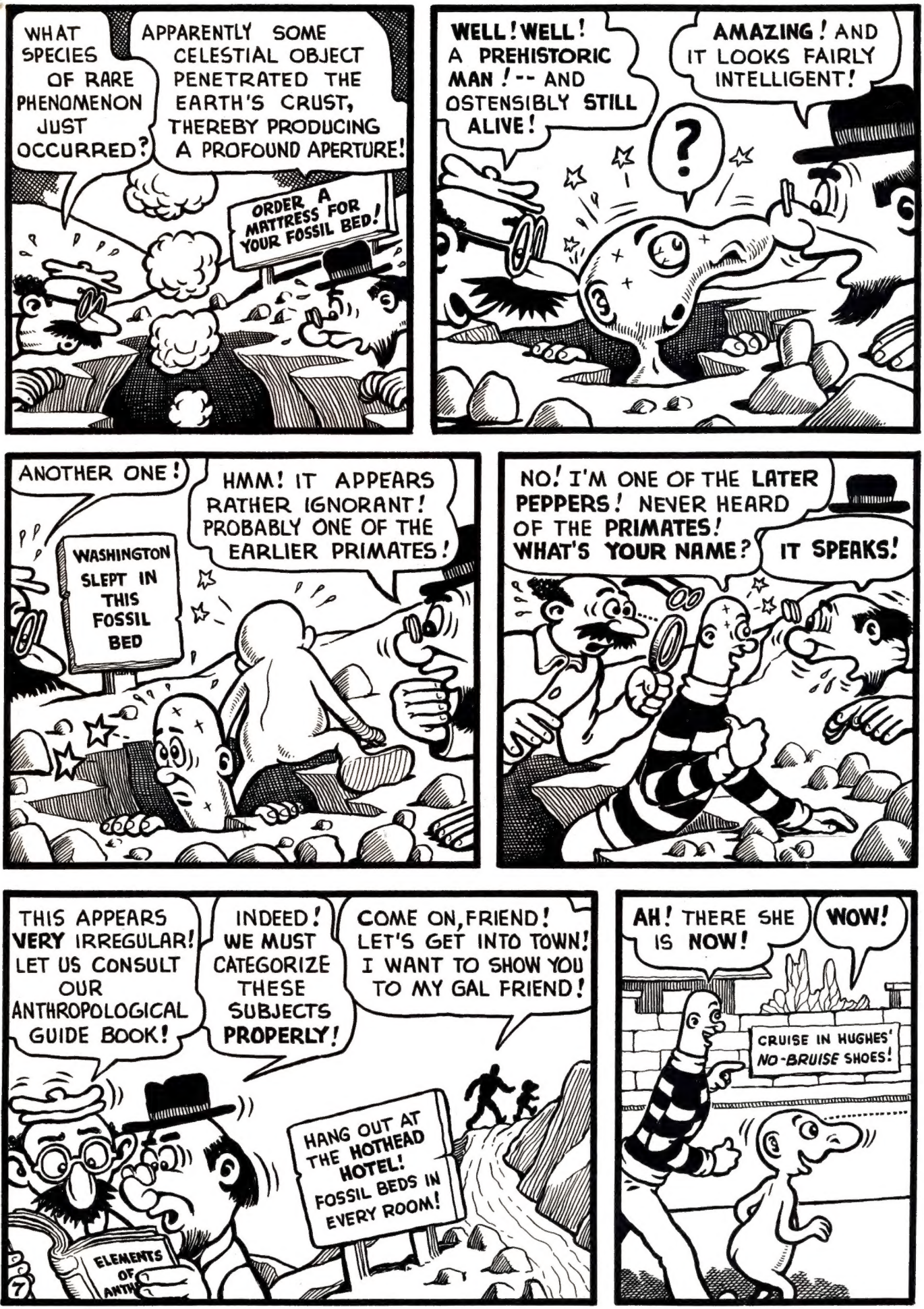
MMM! MAYBE SHE'S RIGHT! MAYBE I DO HAVE A FOG IN THE NOGGIN!
HAND OVER YER MONEY, SONNY!
BUT I'LL SHOW HER! I'LL DO SOMETHING NOBODY'S EVER DONE BEFORE! -- SOMETHING THAT'LL ASTOUND THE WORLD!
GLOP
ZIP!
TROUBLE IS, I CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING TO DO!
WHY YOU!-- I'LL-
I KNOW! I'LL BE THE FIRST FELLOW TO FLY TO THE MOON!
CRACK!
ZIP!
AH! JUST WHAT I NEED FOR THE DEED!
THIS BUILDING IS BEING BUILT BY K. K. CRASH CONSTRUCTION CO.
NOW I'LL JUST PICK UP THIS ROCK--
ANY COOP BY K.K. CRASH CAN'T CRUSH!
2

-- AND GENTLY TOSS IT ON THE OTHER END OF THIS GIRDER!
VOTE FOR McBLOTE!
ZIP!
THUD!
WHY DIDN'T I EVER THINK OF THIS BEFORE?
?
SWISH!
TWENTY-TWO TRILLION TICKS LATER....
HMM! LOOKS AS THOUGH THE MOON HAD FLOCKS OF CHICKEN POX!
MEANWHILE -- ON THE MOON....
HENRY! STOP LOUNGING ON MY BEST ROCKS, AND GO DIG ME SOME POTATERS OUT OF THE CRATERS!
ZZZZRP! ZZZZZZZ-- OKAY! OKAY! ZZZZZPP!
PEACH PITS
STRANGE RANGE
3
AND DON'T COME DRAGGING ANY OF YOUR MOON GOON FRIENDS IN FOR DINNER, OR I'LL CREATE A MEAN SCENE ON YOUR LEAN BEAN!
OKAY! OKAY!


HOW THAT BAG CAN NAG! NEXT TIME SHE GETS IN A PEEVE, I'M GONNA LEAVE!
MOONSHINE 10¢ A SHOE
DIG SOME WILD POTATERS, SHE SAYS! I CAN'T USE THIS SHOVEL IN THIS SOIL! WHAT I NEED IS DYNAMITE!
DIG HERE
CLINK! CLINK!
BOOM!
?
MILDEWED MOONBEAMS! SOMETHIN' DID BLAST THOSE POTATERS RIGHT OUT OF THE GROUND!
QUIET!
HI!
OOPS! WRONG SIDE UP!
EEEEEEEK! WHAT A HORRIBLE FACE!
HORRIBLE? DID YOU EVER GRAB A GOOD GANDER AT YOUR GRUESOME GET-UP, GINK?
DON'T BE INSULTED! YOU'RE PRETTIER THAN MY WIFE! SAY! YOU'RE NOT ONE OF HER RELATIVES, ARE YOU?
4

NOT THAT I KNOW OF! I JUST DROPPED IN FROM EARTH!
YEAH? SAY!-YOU MUST BE HUNGRY AFTER SUCH A LONG TRIP! LET'S TAKE SOME OF THESE POTATERS, AND EAT AT MY PLACE!
OBOY! I SURE COULD MUNCH A BUNCH OF LUNCH!
MY WIFE CAN'T KICK WHEN SHE SEES THESE!
PRE-BAKED
PRE-FRIED
LOOK HERE, DEAR! THIS PRIZE SIZE WILL MAKE PLENTY OF PIES!
WHAT'S THAT?
MOONBEAM
ER--IT'S A FRIEND OF MINE! HE CAME ALL THE WAY FROM EARTH! UH--I--INVITED HIM TO DINNER!
WHAT?! YOU KNOW WHAT I TOLD YOU ABOUT THAT!
HELP!
I'LL FIX YOU!
5
DON'T LET HER HIT ME!
MADAM! DON'T TAN YOUR MAN WITH THAT PAN!
OUT OF MY ROAD, TOAD!
ZIP!


WHAMP!
OW!
GET MOONSTRUCK — 5 BUCKS PER BOP
SWISH!
!
TSK! TSK! ONLY FIVE MINUTES ON THE MOON, AND I GET BELTED BACK TOWARD EARTH!
SUITS ME! ANY PLACE IS SAFER THAN HOME!
ZIP!
AGAIN?
HENRY! YOU COME BACK HERE, OR I'LL CANCEL YOUR COMIC BOOK SUBSCRIPTIONS!
TWENTY-TWO TRILLION TICKS LATER....
PROFESSOR MESSER, IT IS MY CONSIDERED OPINION THAT WE ARE EXTREMELY LIKELY TO DISCOVER THE REMAINS OF EARTH'S EARLIEST INHABITANTS!
OBVIOUSLY IT IS PRIMARILY A CASE OF DIGGING TO A GREATER DEPTH, DOCTOR PROCTOR!
FOSSIL BEDS COMPLETE WITH SPRINGS
6
?
?
CRASH!


WHAT SPECIES OF RARE PHENOMENON JUST OCCURRED?
APPARENTLY SOME CELESTIAL OBJECT PENETRATED THE EARTH'S CRUST, THEREBY PRODUCING A PROFOUND APERTURE!
ORDER A MATTRESS FOR YOUR FOSSIL BED!
WELL! WELL! A PREHISTORIC MAN! -- AND OSTENSIBLY STILL ALIVE!
?
AMAZING! AND IT LOOKS FAIRLY INTELLIGENT!
ANOTHER ONE!
HMM! IT APPEARS RATHER IGNORANT! PROBABLY ONE OF THE EARLIER PRIMATES!
WASHINGTON SLEPT IN THIS FOSSIL BED
NO! I'M ONE OF THE LATER PEPPERS! NEVER HEARD OF THE PRIMATES! WHAT'S YOUR NAME?
IT SPEAKS!
THIS APPEARS VERY IRREGULAR! LET US CONSULT OUR ANTHROPOLOGICAL GUIDE BOOK!
INDEED! WE MUST CATEGORIZE THESE SUBJECTS PROPERLY!
COME ON, FRIEND! LET'S GET INTO TOWN! I WANT TO SHOW YOU TO MY GAL FRIEND!
HANG OUT AT THE HOTHEAD HOTEL! FOSSIL BEDS IN EVERY ROOM!
ELEMENTS OF ANTH
AH! THERE SHE IS NOW!
WOW!
CRUISE IN HUGHES' NO-BRUISE SHOES!
7

HI, HATTIE! I WANTED TO SHOW YOU THAT I CAN DO BIG THINGS -- SO HERE'S A FELLOW I BROUGHT BACK FROM THE --
?
DON'T EAT AT JOE'S! HIS GRUB IS GHASTLY
HIYAH, BABE! I'M GABE!
OH, POWERHOUSE! HOW PERFECTLY WONDERFUL!
I'VE ALWAYS WANTED ONE OF THESE NOVELTY TALKING DOLLS!
HEY! THAT'S A MOON MAN!
A MOON MAN DOLL! HOW CLEVER! I'LL BET I'M THE ONLY GIRL IN TOWN WITH ONE OF THESE!
YUH SURE ARE, SIS!
NOW WAIT A MINUTE!
AHA! SO YOU THOUGHT I COULDN'T FOLLOW, EH, HENRY? WELL, I JUST GAVE MYSELF A GOOD WHOP WITH MY FRYING PAN, AND CAME RIGHT BEHIND YOU!
HELP! IT'S MY WIFE!
ANOTHER ONE ?
?
VOTE FO SNATCHER FOR DOGCATCHER!
ZIP!
HELP!
I'LL TEACH YOU TO MESS AROUND WITH OTHER DAMES!
IT'S AMAZING! THEY'RE ALMOST HUMAN!
I TELL YOU THEY'RE REAL PEOPLE RIGHT FROM THE MOON! I'VE JUST BEEN THERE MYSELF!
QUIET!
8
OH, POWERHOUSE! YOU CAN'T FOOL ME! BUT I APPRECIATE YOUR TRYING SO HARD!
HMM! THIS ISN'T TURNING OUT SO BAD AFTER ALL!
THE END

SHOCK SHANNON

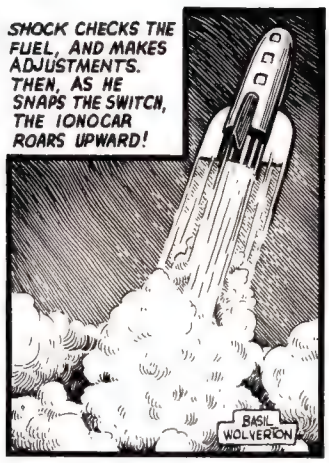
THE YEAR IS 1958. EARTH'S GREATEST CITIES ARE ENGULFED IN ATOMIC FLAMES! WHOLE CONTINENTS ARE SEARED AND POISONED BY THE DIABOLIC CONTRIVANCES OF SENSELESS WAREFARE, WHILE DOOMED MASSES STRUGGLE VAINLY FOR ESCAPE....

AMONG THE MILLIONS IN AMERICA TRAPPED IN THE HOLOCAUST ARE **SHOCK SHANNON** AND **BETH HOBART**...

EVEN WITH THESE ANTI-RADIATION SUITS WE'LL SURELY BE DESTROYED, SHOCK!
LOOK! PART OF THAT IONOCAR PLANT IS STILL STANDING, AND THAT LOOKS LIKE AN UNDAMAGED IONOCAR!

IN A FRANTIC ATTEMPT TO ESCAPE FROM THE ATOMIC INFERNO RAZING THEIR CITY, **SHOCK SHANNON** AND **BETH HOBART** RACE TO AN UNUSED IONOSPHERE SHIP....

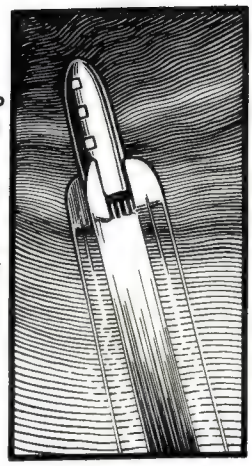
WELL! IT'S SHOCK SHANNON, THE FAMOUS HIGH FLIER! YOU'RE JUST IN TIME TO PILOT ME OUT OF THIS MESS!
WHOEVER YOU ARE, YOU LOOK SILLY WITH THAT GUN! WE'RE JUST AS ANXIOUS TO LEAVE AS YOU ARE!

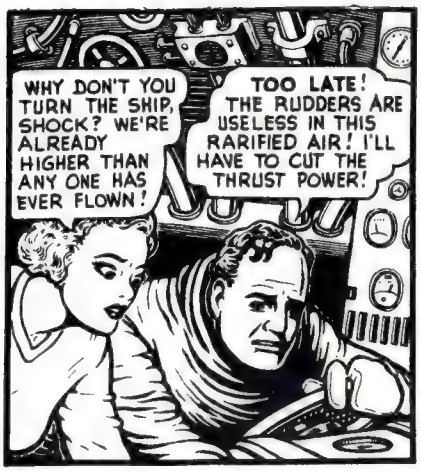


AS THE IONOCAR'S ACCELERATION LESSENS, THE THREE PASSENGERS ARE GRADUALLY FREED FROM THE PARALYZING PULL....

GET AWAY FROM THOSE CONTROLS, SHANNON! AT LEAST I KNOW HOW TO STEER THIS MACHINE!
NONE OF THEM NOTICES THE SAUCER-SHAPED CRAFT HOVERING A SHORT DISTANCE AWAY!
4

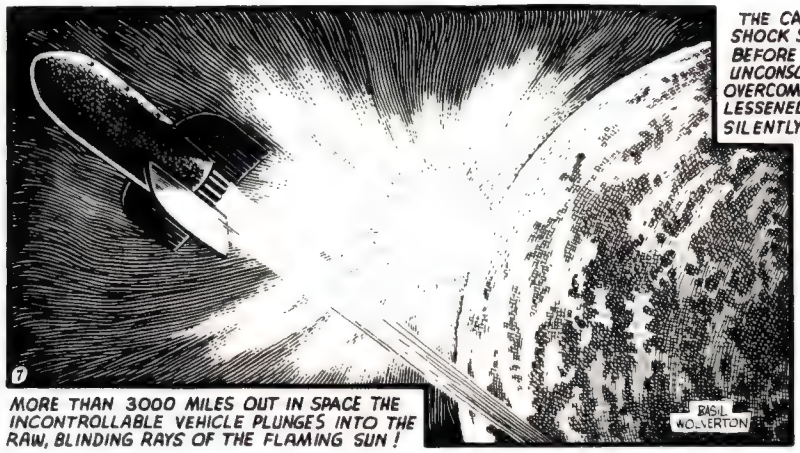
AN UNPILOTED IONOSPHERE SHIP STREAKS UP FROM THE CALDRON OF ATOMIC DEVASTATION ENGULFING THE HEAVILY INHABITED AREAS OF EARTH! INSIDE, BETH WATCHES IN HORROR AS SHOCK TRADES BLOWS WITH AN UNKNOWN INTRUDER....




WHY DON'T YOU TURN THE SHIP, SHOCK? WE'RE ALREADY HIGHER THAN ANY ONE HAS EVER FLOWN!
TOO LATE! THE RUDDERS ARE USELESS IN THIS RARIFIED AIR! I'LL HAVE TO CUT THE THRUST POWER!

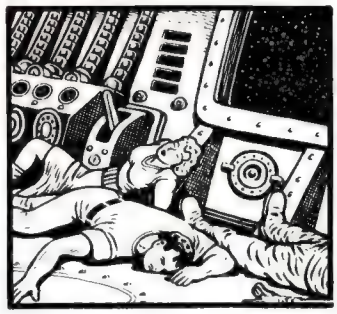
BUT THE IONOCAR HAS GAINED SUCH MOMENTUM THAT EVEN WITH THE ROCKETS OFF IT CONTINUES TO HURTLE INTO THE DEADLY VACUUM OF SPACE!

ARE WE SLOWING UP YET?
NOT MUCH! PERHAPS EARTH'S GRAVITY WILL YET PULL US BACK! IF NOT, WE MAY NEVER STOP TRAVELING!
BASIL WOLVERTON



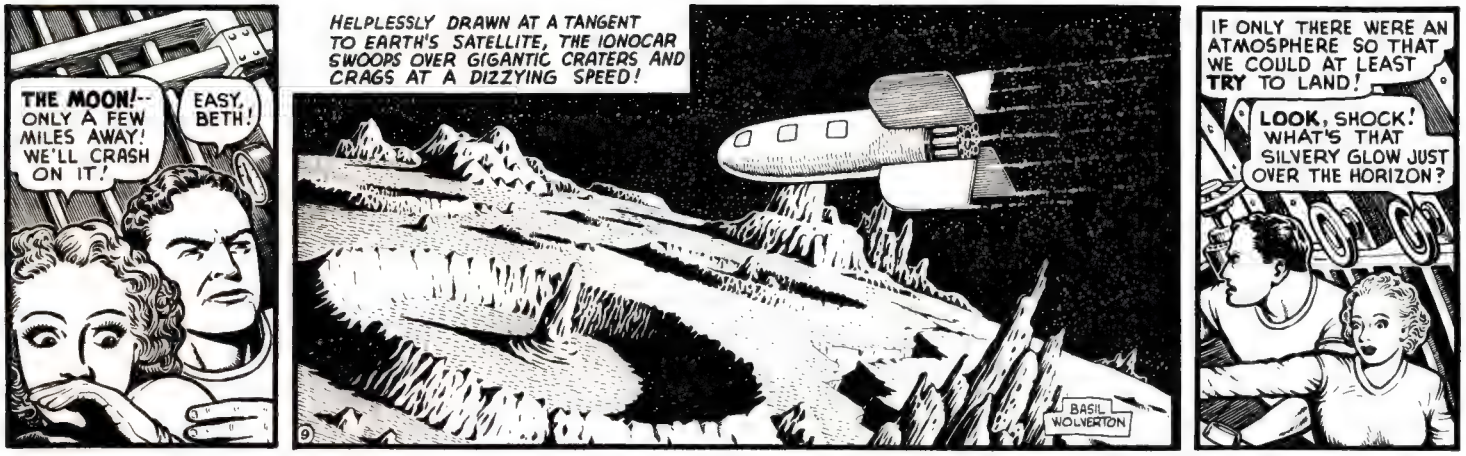
MORE THAN 3000 MILES OUT IN SPACE THE INCONTROLLABLE VEHICLE PLUNGES INTO THE RAW, BLINDING RAYS OF THE FLAMING SUN!

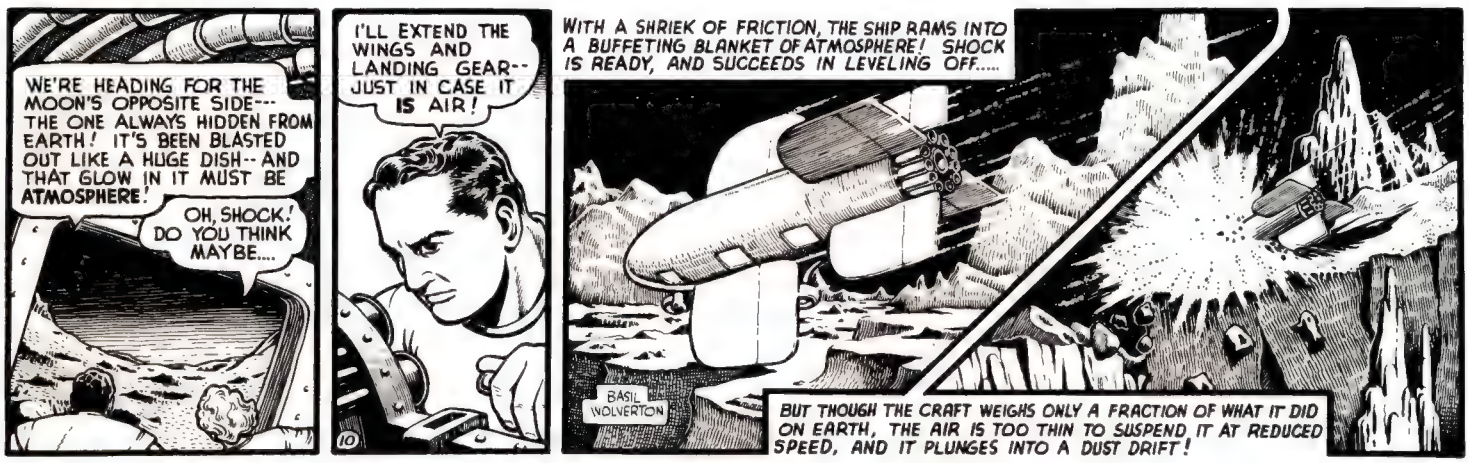
THE CABIN BECOMES UNCOMFORTABLY WARM. SHOCK SHEDS HIS ANTI-RADIATION SUIT, BUT BEFORE HE AND BETH CAN REMOVE THE UNCONSCIOUS STRANGER'S SUIT, BOTH ARE OVERCOME BY SUDDEN VERTIGO -- THE RESULT OF LESSENED GRAVITY PULL. STILL THE SHIP SPEEDS SILENTLY ON INTO METEOR-INFESTED SPACE.....



HOURS AFTER THE TAKE-OFF FROM BOMB-RAVAGED EARTH, SHOCK REGAINS HIS SENSES TO FIND HIMSELF DIZZILY FLOATING IN THE SHIP'S CABIN...

THAT'S NOT EARTH, BETH! THAT'S THE MOON! AND THE INSTRUMENTS INDICATE WE'RE ALREADY TRAPPED BY ITS GRAVITY PULL!
BASIL WOLVERTON


THE MOON!-- ONLY A FEW MILES AWAY! WE'LL CRASH ON IT!
EASY, BETH!
HELPLESSLY DRAWN AT A TANGENT TO EARTH'S SATELLITE, THE IONOCAR SWOOPS OVER GIGANTIC CRATERS AND CRAGS AT A DIZZYING SPEED!
BASIL WOLVERTON
9
IF ONLY THERE WERE AN ATMOSPHERE SO THAT WE COULD AT LEAST TRY TO LAND!
LOOK, SHOCK! WHAT'S THAT SILVERY GLOW JUST OVER THE HORIZON?


WE'RE HEADING FOR THE MOON'S OPPOSITE SIDE--- THE ONE ALWAYS HIDDEN FROM EARTH! IT'S BEEN BLASTED OUT LIKE A HUGE DISH-- AND THAT GLOW IN IT MUST BE ATMOSPHERE!
OH, SHOCK! DO YOU THINK MAYBE....
I'LL EXTEND THE WINGS AND LANDING GEAR-- JUST IN CASE IT IS AIR!
10
WITH A SHRIEK OF FRICTION, THE SHIP RAMS INTO A BUFFETING BLANKET OF ATMOSPHERE! SHOCK IS READY, AND SUCCEEDS IN LEVELING OFF.....
BASIL WOLVERTON
BUT THOUGH THE CRAFT WEIGHS ONLY A FRACTION OF WHAT IT DID ON EARTH, THE AIR IS TOO THIN TO SUSPEND IT AT REDUCED SPEED, AND IT PLUNGES INTO A DUST DRIFT!

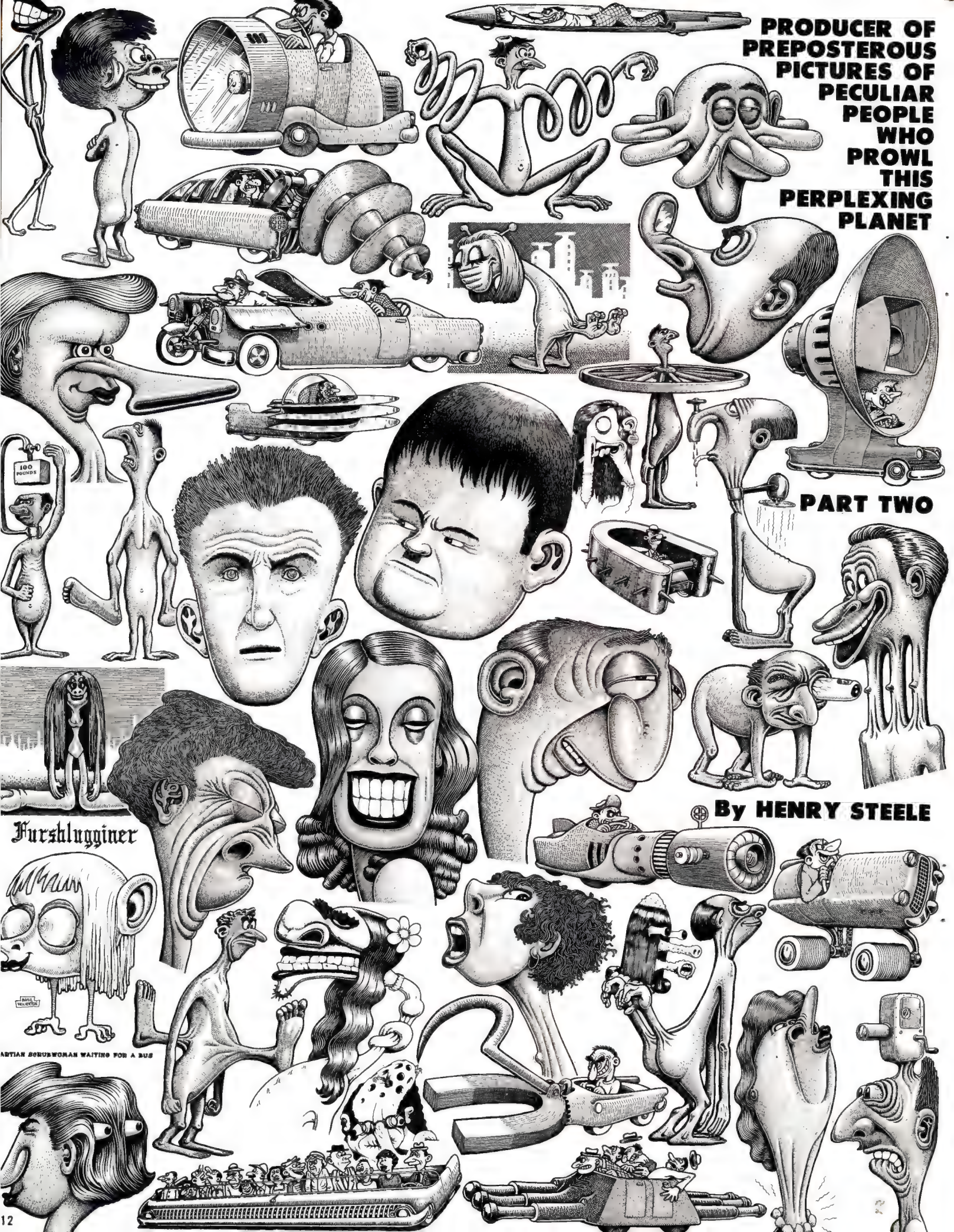
HALF BURIED IN THE MOON'S ANCIENT DUST IS AN AMERICAN IONOCAR WHOSE THREE OCCUPANTS ARE FUGITIVES FROM WAR-TORN EARTH.....
I-I CAN'T SEEM TO GET MY BREATH!
THE OXYGENERATORS HAVE BEEN DAMAGED IN THE CRASH! WE'LL HAVE TO GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE WE SMOTHER!
BUT SHOCK! PERHAPS THE MOON'S ATMOSPHERE IS POISONOUS! BESIDES, WE MIGHT FREEZE OR BURN OUTSIDE!
WE'VE GOT TO RISK IT, BETH!
11
MOMENTARILY EXPECTING THE WORST, BETH AND SHOCK EMERGE FROM THE VEHICLE THAT HAS MIRACULOUSLY BORNE THEM A QUARTER OF A MILLION MILES THRU LETHAL SPACE....
BASIL WOLVERTON

WE'RE STILL ALIVE, SHOCK! WE CAN BREATHE BETTER OUT HERE!
NOW THAT WE'VE DISCOVERED THAT, I'D BETTER GO BACK AFTER OUR UNCONSCIOUS FRIEND!
SUDDENLY THE IONOCAR SETTLES FARTHER INTO THE MOON DUST-- THEN ROLLS OVER AND PLUNGES INTO THE CHASM!
12
WE MIGHT AS WELL HAVE BEEN IN IT! THERE GOES OUR ONLY HOPE OF SEEING EARTH AGAIN!
AND THERE GOES THE MAN WHO IS RESPONSIBLE!
AS THE EARTHLINGS PEER HOPELESSLY INTO THE CHASM, OTHER EYES PEER AT THEM FROM SAUCER-SHAPED CRAFT SKIMMING LOW OVER THE HORIZON!
BASIL WOLVERTON

PRODUCER OF PREPOSTEROUS PICTURES OF PECULIAR PEOPLE WHO PROWL THIS PERPLEXING PLANET

PART TWO

By HENRY STEELE



ARTIAN SCRUBWOMAN WAITING FOR A BUS

LATER SHORT HUMOR FEATURES
(1946-1952) Approximately 135 pages

Of the short comedy features making their first appearance after 1945, Salesman Sid, Hash House Hank and Doctor Whackyhack, the Wacky Quack are one or two-page fillers, centering around recognizable Wolvertonian types. Salesman Sid is like Scoop Scuttle behind a retail counter; Hank is a slovenly short order cook who bedecks his butter with bug bait; and Dr. Whackyhack is another perambulating refutation of the dignity of the medical profession who cuts out paper dolls with scalpels, bone saws, etc., while the medical students watch in awe as he demonstrates in the surgical amphitheatre.

There is also another page in the Peculiar People series, this time under the explicit sponsorship of Powerhouse Pepper. Goofy Giggles is another page of gags. The two episodes of Bedtime Bunk are pleasant fantasies of the "once upon a time" variety, one of which deals with a shoe salesman who always dreamed of feet: hoping that changing his job would change his dreams, he became a gas meter reader, but then he always d r e a m e d of cubic feet, so he switched jobs again. As a lumberman he dreamed of board feet; as a waiter in a nightclub, of club feet. To get away from feet altogether he moved to Goofinia, where no English is spoken, and there sold peanuts -- but discovered to his horror that the Goofinian word for peanuts was "feet."

Two promising features which did not survive for a second episode were Dauntless Dawson and Professor Jogg's Travelogs. Dawson Droop was an anemic little research chemist who always spoke in regular metrical rhymes. (Despite the fact that much of the Wolvertonian dialogue turns on internal rhymes, only Dawson and Professor Pickens, among all of Wolverton's characters, always spoke in regular rhymes with lines of equal length). Intent upon suicide in view of his insignificance, Dawson mixes up a mess of chemicals which he assumes will be fatal, but instead they turn him into a giant. He christens himself Dauntless Dawson and proceeds to apprehend his adversary, the Nose, before the potion wears off and returns him to his former diminutive size.

In Professor Jogg's Travelogs, the Professor and his companion, Colonel Clogg, land on a barren island. "Shucks! There's no shelter to shield my shoe shine if it should shower!" snarls Clogg. They find a cartoonist perched on top of a volcano crater, vainly in search of ideas. Jogg tosses some dynamite into the crater, causing an eruption. This frightens Clogg, but Jogg reassures him: "This infernal internal churn'll not be eternal, colonel!" Enough rocks hit the cartoonist in the head to give him many new ideas. This 4-page tale seems like a fragment of what was intended to be a much longer story.

Three other late features lasted more than one episode: Hothead Hotel, Bingbang Buster and his Horse, Hedy, and Jumpin' Jupiter.

Hothead Hotel (the shed where you dread to head for bed) was unusually clever in its plotting, featuring elevators that ran diagonally, house detectives disguising themselves as giant bedbugs, and fur-lined bathtubs which confer their fur on their occupants. The second episode--clumsily rechristened Piston Pete by editor Stan Lee for no apparent reason--finds the hotel additionally occupied with motorcycle policeman and indians on horseback.

Bingbang Buster rode the range for ten episodes in BLACK DIAMOND WESTERN in 1949-1951. Each was but 3 pages long, so there was never any opportunity to develop much of a plot. Buster differed from Wolverton's usual humor feature by being blond, reasonably dressed, with relatively presentable features, and although small, was not ludicrously undersized. He rode about on an absurd little horse with an oversized head, and used no saddle. Buster, although naturally possessed of great strength, relied more in the early episodes on Hedy to provide the muscle in disciplining wrongdoers. Polite and confident, Buster confined his activities largely to capturing bandits, dry gulchers and barnburners, stopping stampedes, and carrying the mail. On occasion, however, he would find himself riding a guided missile or piloting a flying saucer. When this latter activity made Hedy jealous, Buster reassured her: "When it comes to speed, steed, you're just what I need! Besides, you don't need so much coolin' and refuelin', and it's easier to recline on your spine than it was to squat in a knot in that flying pot!" Buster usually carried no gun; in a shoot-out, he was fast enough to draw his opponent's gun.

Jumpin' Jupiter, who appeared for four 4-page episodes in WEIRD TALES OF THE FUTURE in 1952-1953, lived on an asteroid 33 feet in diameter, and needed no space ship -- as his name implies, he merely jumped from sphere to sphere. He shared his asteroid with Floyd, his planetoid boid, who sang such songs as "Five eyes of blue, five feet, too --a mighty, mighty gruesome view...has anybody seen my ghoul?" Like Mystic Moot, Jumpin' Jupiter generally helped mediocre misfits with minor problems.

LATER SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY FEATURES (1951-1953) 95 pages

From 1942 until 1951, WWolverton drew nothing except comedy features, but in 1951-1953 he returned to science fiction, and, displaying a hitherto unutilized talent for fantasy, turned out seventeen individually complete episodes of very high quality--eight science fiction and nine fantasy tales.

The earliest is titled "The End of the World." Julius Kane, a pacifist scientist, has just discovered how to create explosions more powerful than those of the hydrogen bomb. Forced by an authoritarian state of the 1984 variety to put his discovery to military use, Kane discovers that plans are afoot to conquer Mars. To thwart these plans he then uses his discovery in such a way as to cause the moon to leave its orbit and approach the earth. It shatters just before it collides but the resulting destruction kills everyone on earth except Kane, who lives in misery, contemplating the planet he has destroyed. This is a very impressive illustrated narrative (even though the plot is not truly novel) and, like most of the other Wolverton tales of this period, could with great advantage have been extended to a length far greater than its six pages.

"Planet of Terror" is a more conventional story about a couple of hunters on Saturn who are climbing up a sacred mountain when they see gigantic evil apparitions floating in the sky, warning them away. But they are seized by worshippers and brought into the presence of their "god," who proves vulnerable to a pistol shot. As he dies, he confesses that he invented a device to amplify mental images which he projected to gain the worship of the natives and frighten intruders away.

In "The Eye of Doom," the first space ship to reach Venus brings back with it a hideous creature in the form of a gigantic eye, which devours men and animals by incorporating them within its mass upon mere contact.

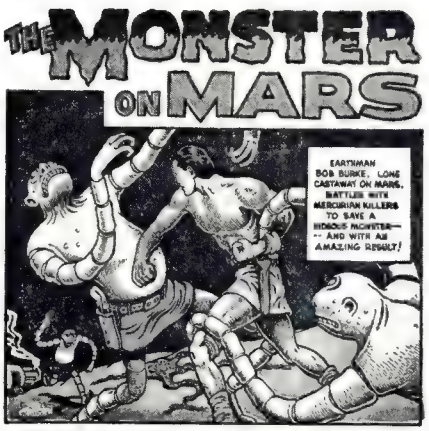
In "Flight to the Future" a killer volunteers for suspended animation to escape punishment. 20,000 years later he is awakened by a very aged man, who is ruler of the maimed and degenerate race of impaired humans who somehow survived the nuclear wars of previous millenia. The aged ruler is the only normally intelligent man alive, and the reanimated killer plots his murder so that he may succeed him. But, he is detected and imprisoned.

A few days later he is released since the earth is about to be destroyed by an approaching planetoid. The aged man turns out to have been the victim of the presumed "killer" but he had not died. After recovery he had identified his assailant and then went into suspended animation with the intent of having his revenge, but was revived many years before the assailant and had decided to befriend him. Upon hearing this, the assailant makes yet a third attempt on the old man's life, but at that moment the planetoid hits the earth, and annihilation ensues. Again, a good story and good art, but unmercifully compressed, this time into only four pages.

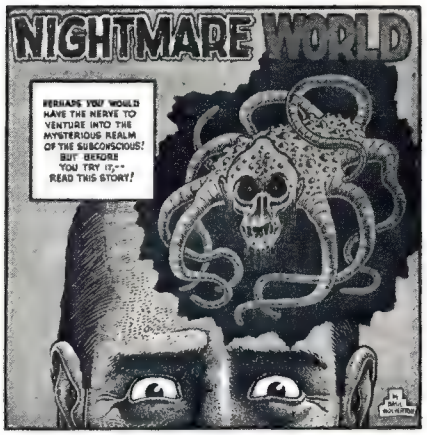
"Escape to Death," however, tells a brief story briefly. Rocky Trask plans a prison break from a labor camp on a Jupiterian satellite. With the aid of a stolen gun, he

THE BRAIN-BATS OF VENUS

THE MONSTER ON MARS


EARTHMAN BOB BURKE - LONE CASTAWAY ON MARS, BATTLES WITH MERCURIAN KILLERS TO SAVE A HELPLESS MONSTER--- AND WITH AN AMAZING RESULT!

NIGHTMARE WORLD


PERHAPS YOU WOULD HAVE THE NERVE TO VENTURE INTO THE MYSTERIOUS REALM OF THE SUBCONSCIOUS! BUT BEFORE YOU TRY IT--- READ THIS STORY!

ONE QUESTION WAS ON EVERYBODY'S MIND: *WHO WOULD STEAL A GRAVEYARD FULL OF CORPSES?....*

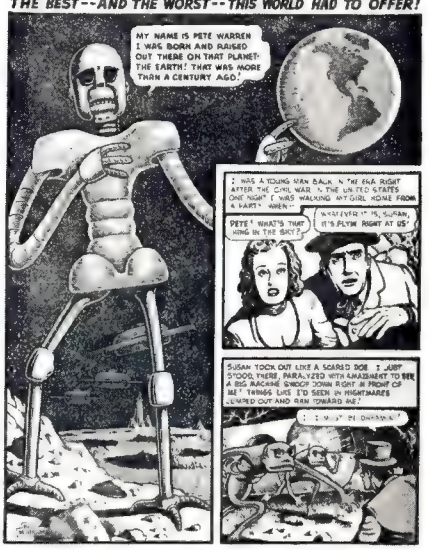
ONE OF OUR GRAVEYARDS IS MISSING!
HELP! HELP! IT'S GONE! IT'S MISSING! THE CEMETERY HAS DISAPPEARED!
COME WITH US INTO AN UNKNOWN WORLD!

ROBOT WOMAN

THOUGH SHE WAS FORMED OF METAL AND PLASTIC, HER CREATOR CLAIMED SHE WAS THE PERFECT WOMAN!
BUT--- LIKE ANY OTHER MACHINE, SHE HAD HER FAILINGS!

THE MAN FROM THE MOON

THIS IS THE WEIRD TALE OF ONE MAN WHO MISSED THE BEST--AND THE WORST--THIS WORLD HAD TO OFFER!

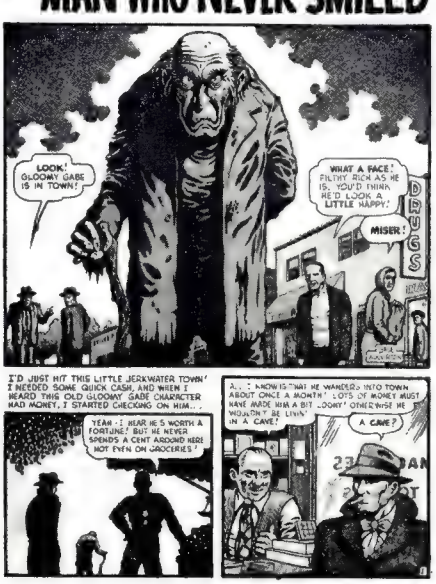


THEY CRAWL BY NIGHT!

COME WITH US INTO AN UNKNOWN WORLD!
THERE WAS ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND OUT WHAT THE CRABMEN WERE UP TO.... *YOU HAD TO BECOME ONE OF THEM!*
THE CRABS! THE CRABS!

PEOPLE SAID THE OLD HERMIT WAS WEALTHY....YET HE WAS KNOWN AS...

THE MAN WHO NEVER SMILED



SWAMP MONSTER

KILLER CABOT FLEES FROM THE HANGMAN'S NOOSE---- ONLY TO RUN INTO SOMETHING MORE TERRIBLE DEEP IN THE MALIGNANT SWAMP!
I KNOW THIS PART OF THE SWAMP LIKE A BOOK! EVEN IN THE BLOODHOUNDS THEY'LL HAVE A TOUGH TIME HUNTING ME NOW
HA! THE MUTTS MUST HAVE LOST THE SCENT! I CAN HARDLY SMELL THEM!

forces his way aboard the next ship to arrive at the prison, only to discover that the ship is crewless and automatic, and has been programmed to return to Mars. Inasmuch as there were no prisoners for the return trip, the oxygen generators had been shut off, leaving Trask to suffocate.

"The Monster on Mars" tells of the sole survivor of a space ship crash, living alone on Mars for seven years, who suddenly finds a horse-sized hand, equipped with two eyes and a mouth, inside his hut. This very articulate hand tells him that if it is allowed to stay in his lodging, it will help him return to earth. After a battle in which he is aided by the hand, he returns to his house to find a beautiful girl unconscious on the floor. She had used hypnotic powers to conceal her true appearance from him, but these powers went into abeyance when she was stunned during the battle.

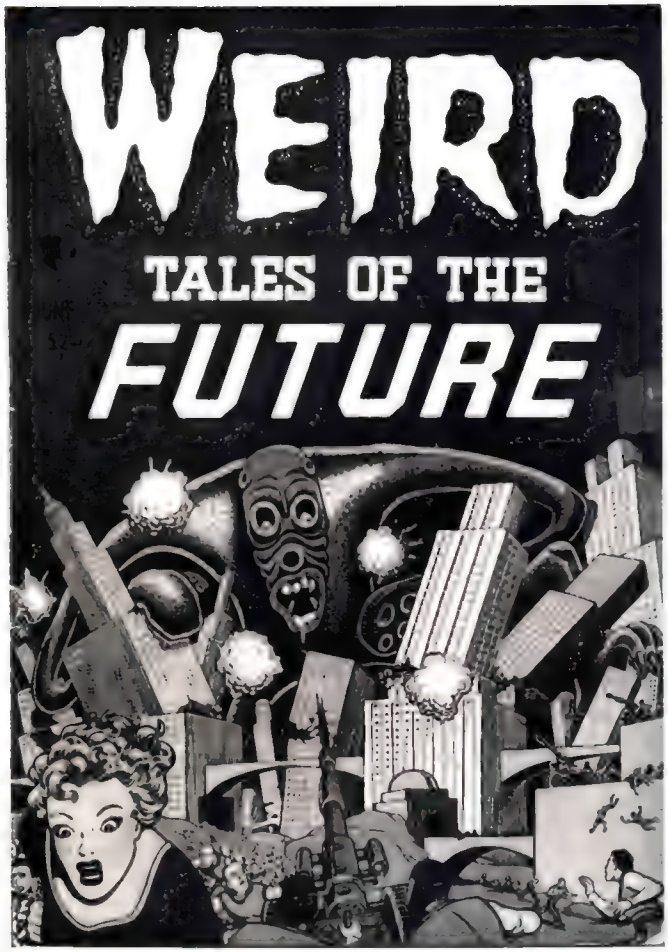
"The Brain-Bats of Venus" was apparently inspired by Clark Ashton Smith's tale, "The Vaults of Yah-Vombis." The first spacecraft to reach Venus crashes upon landing, killing one of the pilots. The other space man ventures out and encounters large four-legged creatures with their heads surmounted by bat-like cowls, the tops of which resemble convoluted pink brains with evil piercing eyes staring out of them. The spaceman shoots one of these beasts, but is surprised to see the brain-bat cowl leave the body and fly away. The others attack, and the spaceman retreats inside the ship, only to discover that his dead partner is reanimated, and bears a brain-bat over his head. The dead man speaks to him, but it is the brain-bat's intelligence which makes his lips move, as he commands the living man to fill the ship with brain-bats so that they may rule Earth. The surviving pilot tries to thwart the scheme, but fails. As the story ends he is himself a zombie beneath a superincumbent bat cowl.

"The Man from the Moon" is the last science fiction story. In it, Pete Warren, an American living in the late 1860s, is captured by men from the moon and taken back with them. To survive, his organism is gradually modified until at last only his brain survives, the rest of his body having been replaced with metal, plastic and electronic devices. About 120 years later he returns to Earth, only to find that it has been desolated by nuclear war. The remaining men are savage, hideous mutants, and Warren returns despairingly to the moon.

"The Devil Birds," first of the fantasy stories, is set in Nevada seven years after the first H-bomb test penetrated the Earth's crust. A photographer named Benson disappeared while exploring the region of the crater, and his friends come searching for him. They find their way to the edge of the crater, which is obscured in a smoky haze and frequented by the devil birds, resembling huge green vultures with lizard tails. These birds force one of the searchers to fall into the crater, but after he falls some distance he is metamorphosed into a devil bird himself, and joyfully joins the flock. He then forces his companion over the rim into the crater, happily anticipating their reunion as devil birds.

In "Where Monsters Dwell," a reporter is thrust into another dimension by a light ray turned upon him by a diabolical scientist, and finds that everything is hideously distorted in this dimension. He joins a number of men who've been relegated to this land of horror by the scientist, and together they fight off the assorted subhuman and monster menaces of the alien dimension. The reporter manages to break through into the normal world by jumping back into the path of the light ray when it's again used, then banishing the fiendish scientist himself to the alien dimension. He then flashes the beam back on to let in the other humans, but before any of them can re-enter one of the subhuman monsters breaks through. The reporter disables this monster, but ends the tale in des-

AIRWAYS WERE SO CROWDED AND IN SUCH CONFUSION THAT THERE WAS SMALL LIKELIHOOD OF MILITARY POLICE FINDING ME./ DAYS PASSED WHILE THE WORLD TREMBLED WITH INCREASING SEVERITY! FROM THE SKY I WITNESSED A STEADY EXODUS FROM THE CRUMBLING CITIES---THE PROUD CITADELS THAT HAD BEEN BUILT ON THE LOOT OF BLOODY WARS!
OUR SATELITE CAME EVER CLOSER, LOOMING LARGER BY THE HOUR/ SEAS PILED UP IN MOUNTAINOUS TIDES THAT SURGED INLAND.....
TERRIFIC GALES SWEPT THE GLOBE, WHIPPING MOST AIR TRAFFIC TO DESTRUCTION.....
I KNEW THAT NO LIFE COULD CONTINUE ON THE EARTH'S SURFACE./ IT WAS CONVULSED WITH QUAKES./ GREAT FISSURES RAN THE LENGTHS OF THE CONTINENTS, SLICING THE WORLD'S LAND SURFACE INTO VAST SEGMENTS!
LAVA, SMOKE AND STEAM SPEWED FROM EARTH'S INTERIOR! GREAT PILLARS OF OCEAN WATER WERE PULLED INTO THE SKY! YET A FEW AIR CARS, MINE INCLUDED, REMAINED ALOFT!
THEN, WHEN IT WAS ONLY A FEW THOUSAND MILES FROM EARTH, THE MOON WAS SHATTERED BY THE TREMENDOUS FORCE OF GRAVITATION EXERTED BETWEEN THE TWO PLANETS!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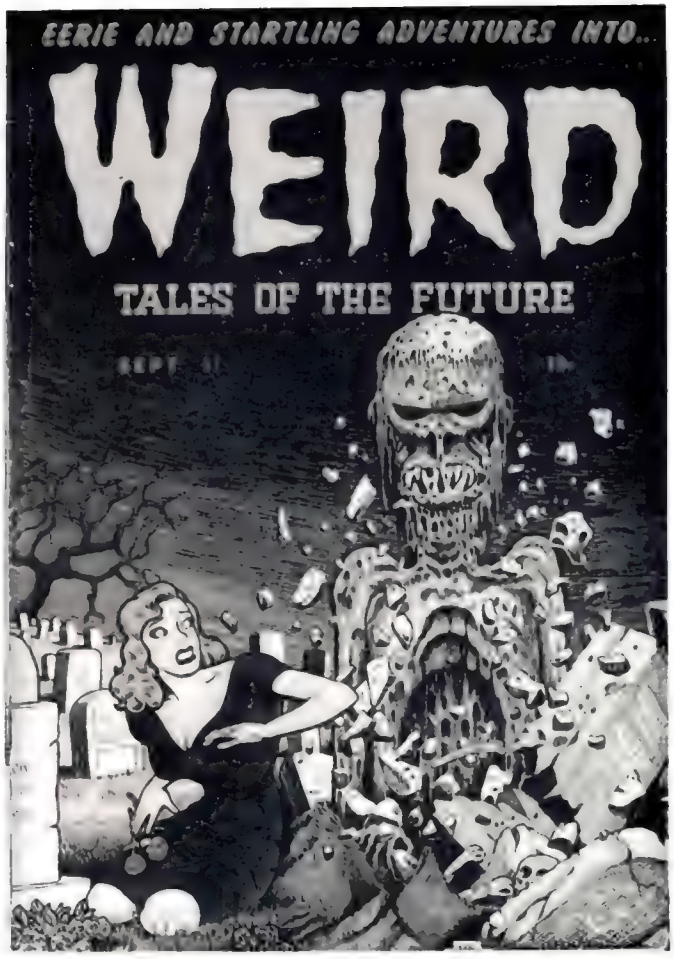
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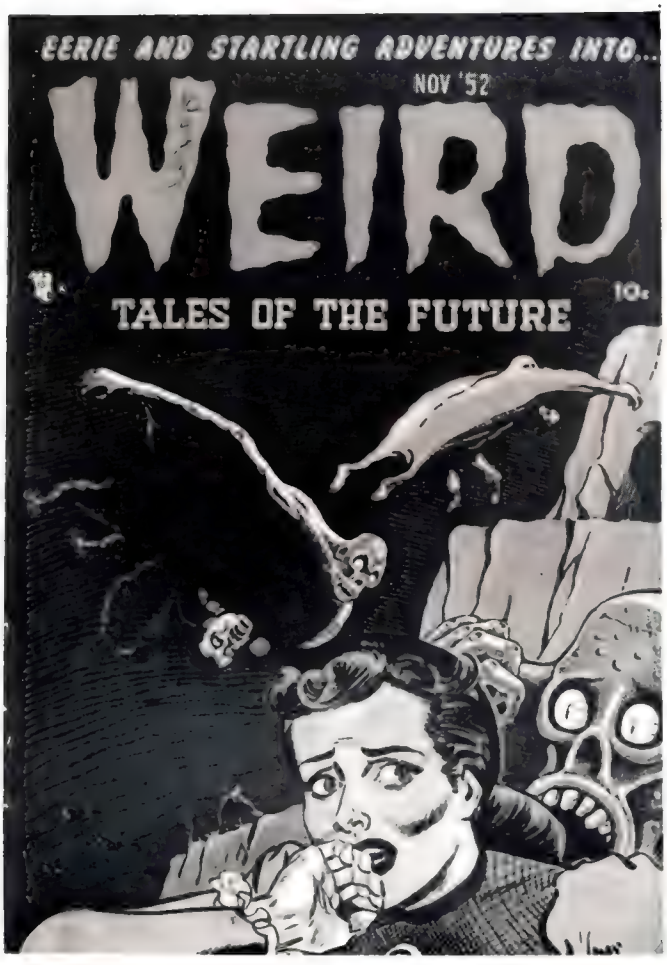
TALES OF THE FUTURE


EERIE AND STARTLING ADVENTURES INTO...
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WEIRD
TALES OF THE FUTURE
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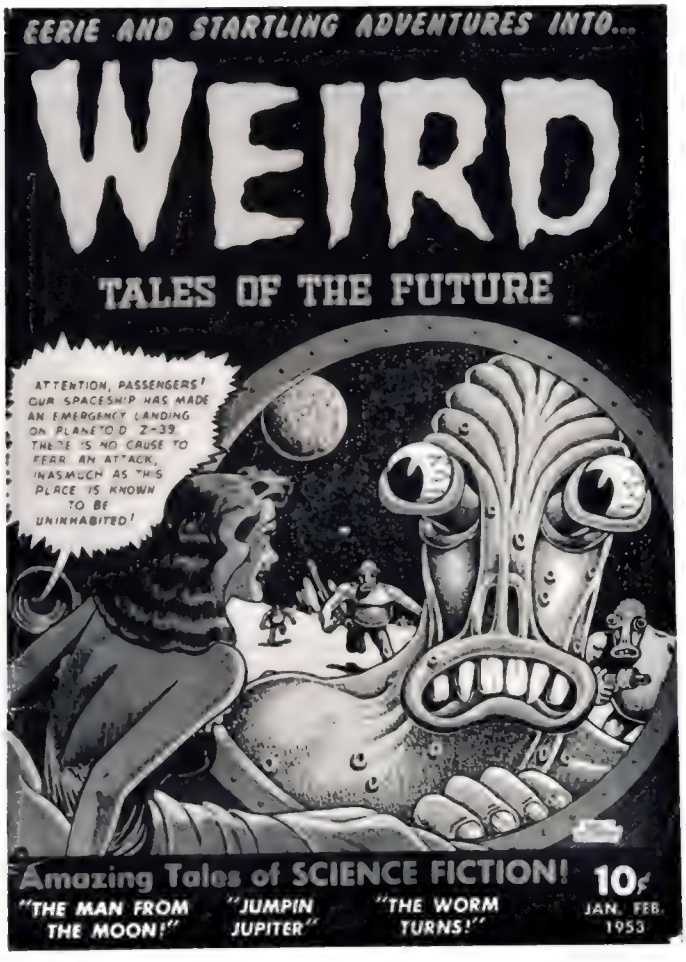
EERIE AND STARTLING ADVENTURES INTO...
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TALES OF THE FUTURE
ATTENTION, PASSENGERS! OUR SPACESHIP HAS MADE AN EMERGENCY LANDING ON PLANETOID Z-39. THERE IS NO CAUSE TO FEAR AN ATTACK, INASMUCH AS THIS PLACE IS KNOWN TO BE UNINHABITED!
Amazing Tales of SCIENCE FICTION!
"THE MAN FROM THE MOON!"
"JUMPIN JUPITER"
"THE WORM TURNS!"
10¢
JAN. FEB. 1953

perate bewilderment, asking the reader how to solve the dilemma: Should he rescue the other men--hopeless distorted misfits like himself--who are now being attacked by a host of weird creatures, and in so doing risk having the world invaded by these inhuman monsters? Or should he sacrifice these men and avoid the risk of invasion by monsters? Another excellent story, overly compressed to six pages.

In "Nightmare World" a scientist formulates a fluid which he hopes will aid him in his probings of the subconscious mind. He falls asleep, and thinks he is dreaming of being in a fantastic mid-region of stairways and terraces unsupported in space. Suddenly he's attacked by a bat-like flying baboon which takes him to a cliff ledge where his brain is placed inside the skull of a similar flying monstrosity. He awakes from the dream to find himself once again in his familiar laboratory -- this time discovering that he is now the flying baboon-bat he dreamed about.

In "One of our Graveyards is Missing" a graveyard disappears entirely from the center of town, and suspicion centers on a scar-faced stranger. When questioned, he confesses that he's a Saturnian who has stolen the cemetery to provide bodies for unspecified Saturnian experiments. The townspeople plead with him to return their cemetery, promising to pay any price. The stranger agrees, and when it's restored the aged caretaker gleefully leaps back into its familiar confines. A second later he's horrified because now it is the town which has disappeared: in the last panel the graveyard is shown suspended in an utter void.

"Robot Woman" is one of the best of the fantasy tales. Fozzmo, a scientific genius and hideous cripple who makes Steinmetz look like an Adonis, is starved for love and affection, and creates a beautiful mechanical woman, Robota. She is a tender, loving mechanism who's forever caressing Fozzmo and slowly repeating the sentence that is her main stock in trade: "You...are...the...only...man...I...could...ever...love." Tiring of her relentless devotion, Fozzmo eventually turns upon her and knocks her into a heating unit, burning off her plastic skin and making her hideous. As she still pursues her creator, he stumbles back into a shelf full of acids and is burned to death. Days later a burglar breaks into the lab, only to flee screaming when he encounters the repulsive robot doggedly standing guard over the burnt skeleton of the inventor.

"They Crawl by Night" concerns an asylum inmate who wakes up late at night to find his ward populated by giant crabs with human heads. When he tells the medical staff of his experience, they respond by sedating him. The next time he sees the crabs, he remains quiet but follows them down a long tunnel to their subterranean den where he overhears their plans to conquer the earth, changing all men into crab-men, beginning with the asylums. The patient returns to the hospital and again tells his story, this time rewarded with a straitjacket. When the crab-men return, he loses consciousness and awakens the next morning to find himself a crab-man, like all the other patients. He rushes to the doctors to vindicate himself, but discovers that they, too, are now crab-men.

"The Man Who Never Smiled" concerns a scowling hermit who lives in a cave high up on a mountain. He comes into town once a month, but although reputed to be rich, never buys anything. A burglar passing through town learns of this and scales the peak to rob the man, discovering too late that the old man never smiled because behind his lips were the fangs of a vampire.

The last story, "Swamp Monster," is probably the best drawn. An escaped convict with the aristocratic name of Jack Cabot finds an old house in a swamp, and is welcomed by a vampire who promptly attacks him and turns him into an apelike fiend. He then attacks the old man, who flies away in the form of a bat. When the prison guards show up at the house, the monster frightens them away, but in pursuing them through the swamp he strangles himself in a vine while leaping down upon them. After death, his face changes back to that of the convict. Just as the guards are congratulating themselves, the vampire bat returns and scatters the men, seeming to be intent on gloating while flying about the victim's body.

The art in the last four or five fantasy stories represented a new level of achievement for Wolverton, with more flexibility, strength and assurance being added to his already strong and bold style. In these same stories, too, Wolverton developed a rather capricious tendency to include in his cast of incidental characters and spectators caricatures of individuals such as Frank Sinatra, the late Senator Joseph McCarthy, Dean Martin, Ernie Kovacs, and others.

But just at that time the bottom dropped out of the market for comic book art, and Wolverton left the field at the very moment he was perfecting a superb fantasy style. Fans of fantasy and horror literature will particularly regret this, since Wolverton's art was maturing to the point where it would have been ideal for adaptations of novels and stories by Poe, H. P. Lovecraft, Algernon Blackwood, and others, in the medium of the extended graphic story. With his gift for combining fantasy, horror and science fiction, Wolverton might have done splendidly in depicting the perilous adventures of ghost detectives and their occult apparatus, such as Blackwood's "John Silence" and William Hope Hodgson's "Carnacki, the Ghost Finder." But, after leaving comic books, Wolverton's path took him in other directions--toward monstroid caricatures and illustrated theology.

Wolverton's style naturally continued to develop, and by the time his BIBLE STORY feature appeared in THE PLAIN TRUTH magazine in late 1958, many of the elements of comic book style had been sublimated and incorporated into a style more appropriate to book illustration. In many drawings the intricate pen and ink work seems suggestive of Virgil Finlay, illustrator of fantasy pulp magazine stories in the 1940s. Elsewhere some of the drawings resemble the Bible illustrations by the nineteenth century artist Gustav Dore'. But, there are still some resemblances to his comic book work. Adam looks a bit like Spacehawk, and Jason bears a similarity to Meteor Martin. Furthermore, although THE PLAIN TRUTH editor Herbert W. Armstrong prefaces the collected BIBLE STORY volumes with the statement that no other Bible Story for children was acceptable because they all dealt with "blood and thunder stories," Wolverton concentrates his attention in the illustrations on the more h i d e o u s events, and certainly no Bible Story for children has ever contained more grisly drawings than many of Wolverton's.

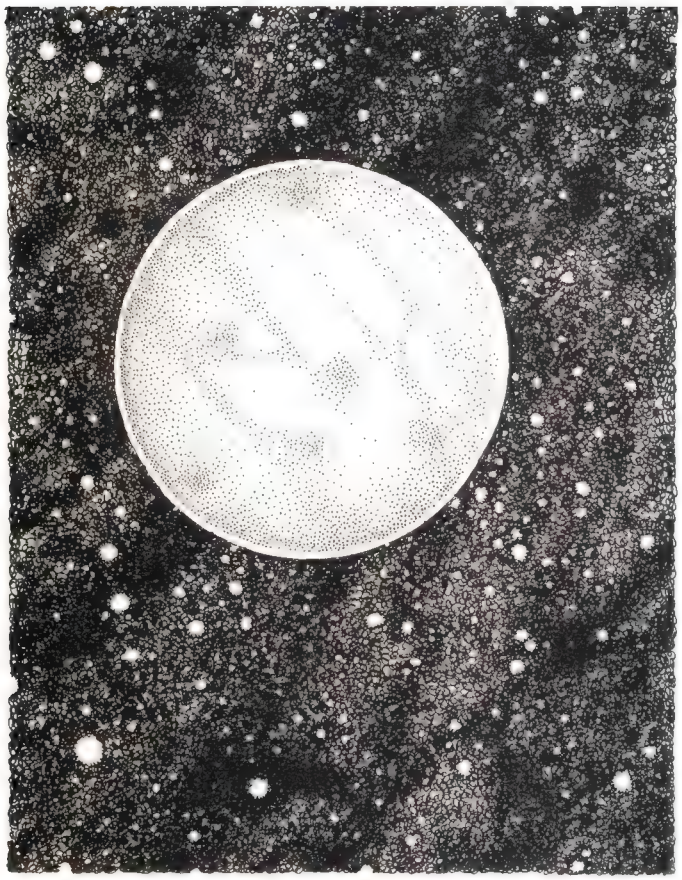
THE BIBLE STORY has been retitled THE STORY OF MAN, and today appears serially in Ambassador Press's TOMORROW'S WORLD, the companion magazine of THE PLAIN TRUTH.

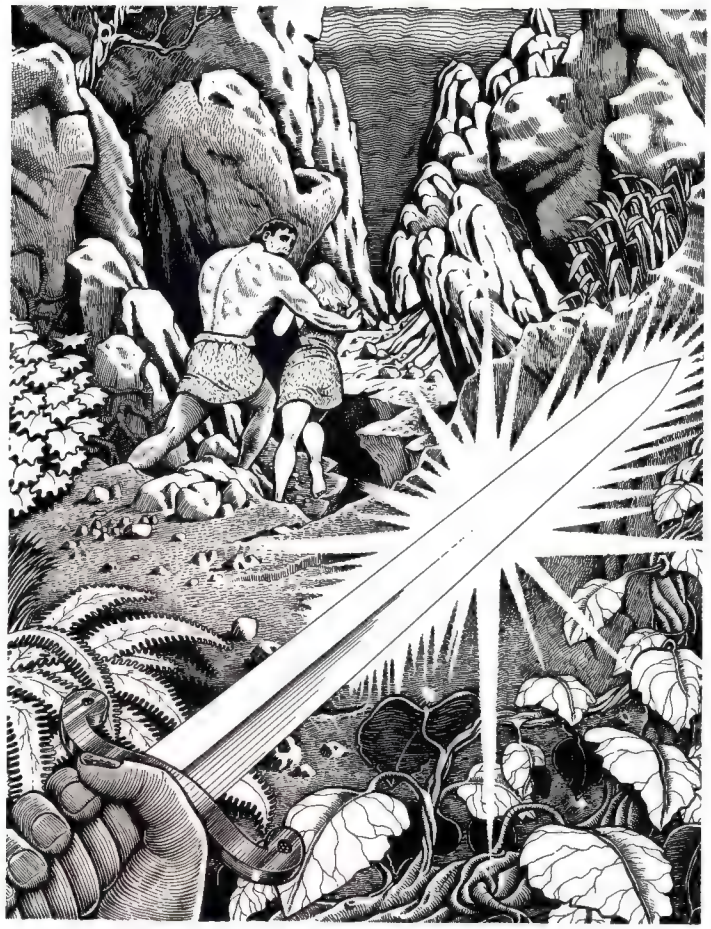
-- Henry Steele

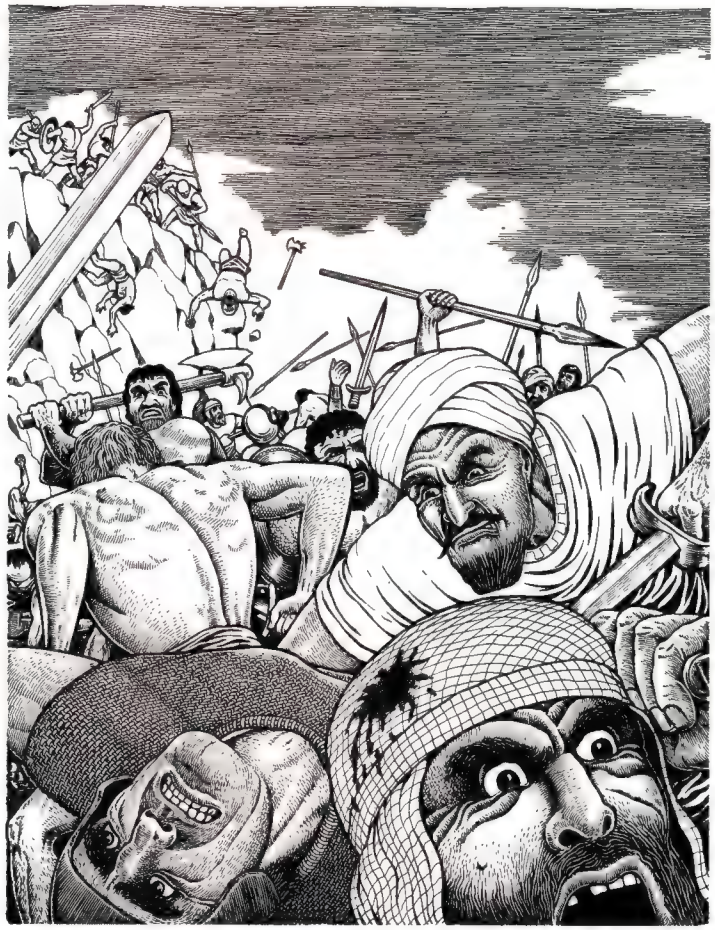
A part of THE STORY OF MAN appears in the following seven pages, reprinting almost all of the illustrations from the first four chapters of THE BIBLE STORY, Volume 1.

The Prophesies of The Book of Revelation section is collected from drawings appearing originally in THE PLAIN TRUTH and two Ambassador Press booklets published in the 1950s. The illustrations are arranged in a new sequence, minus captions and accompanying text, except for the first one. A few have never been printed before.

"IN THE BEGINNING"

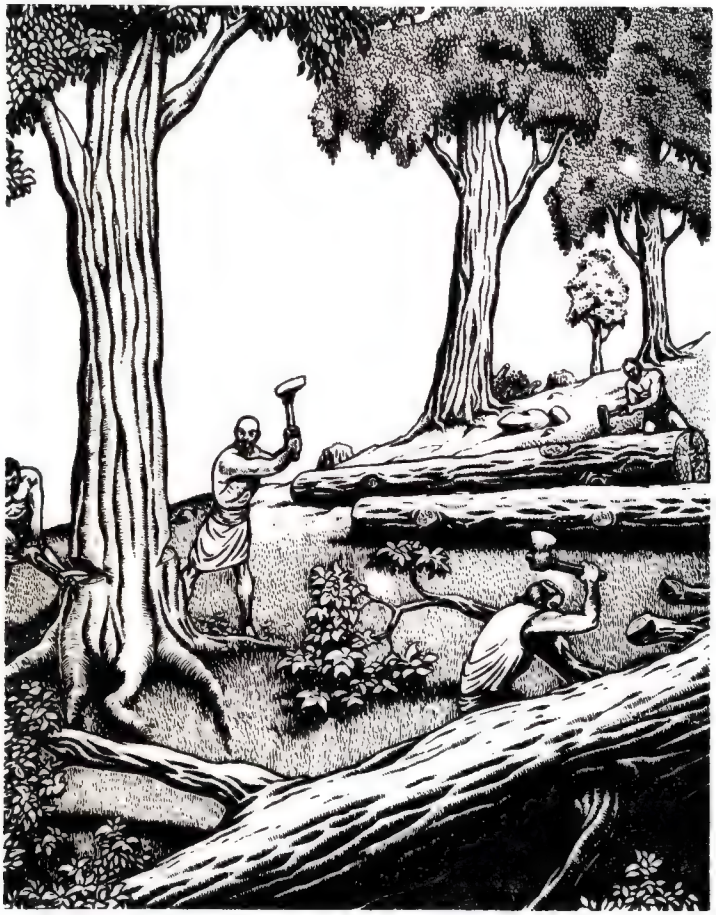


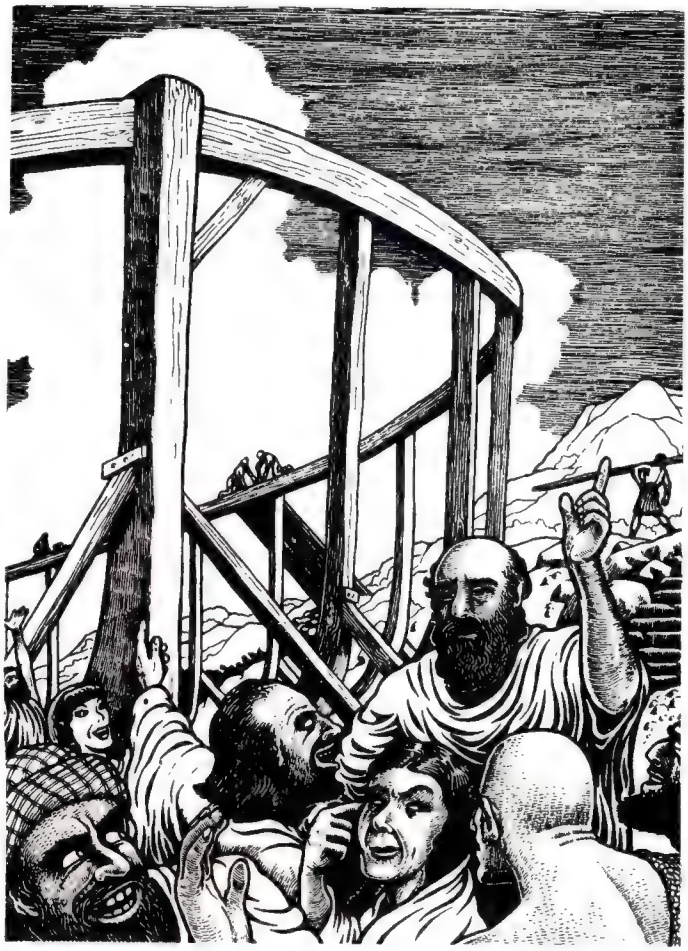


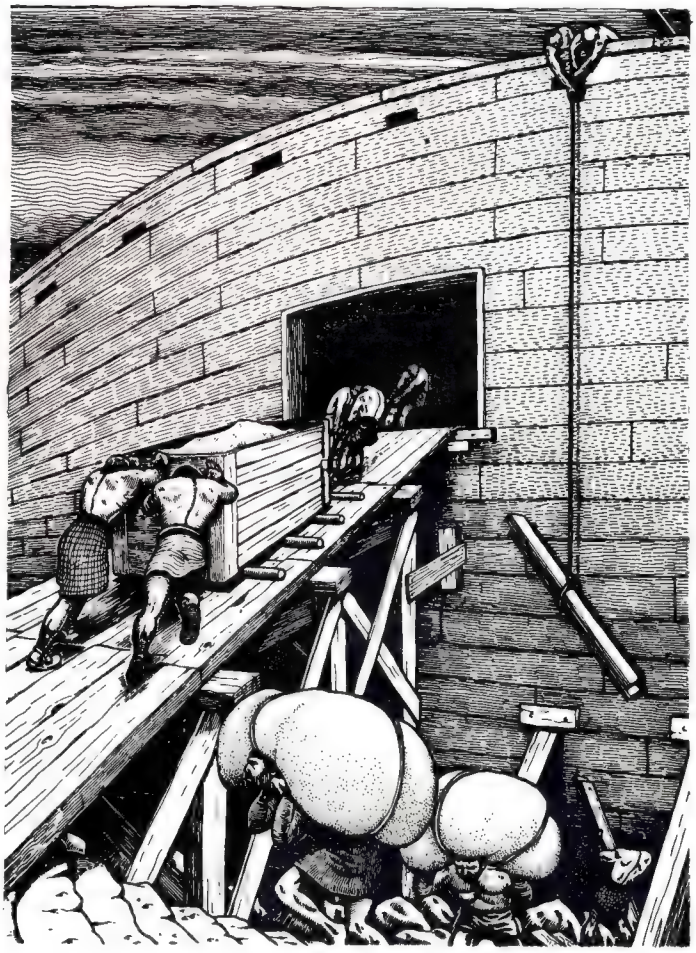


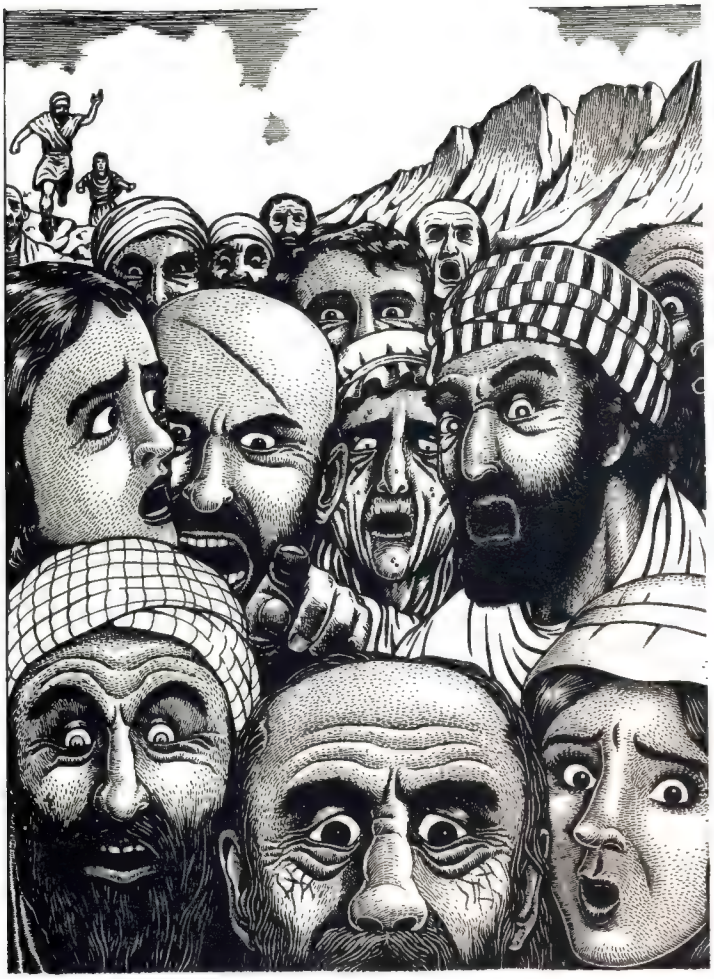
Violence filled the earth in those days.

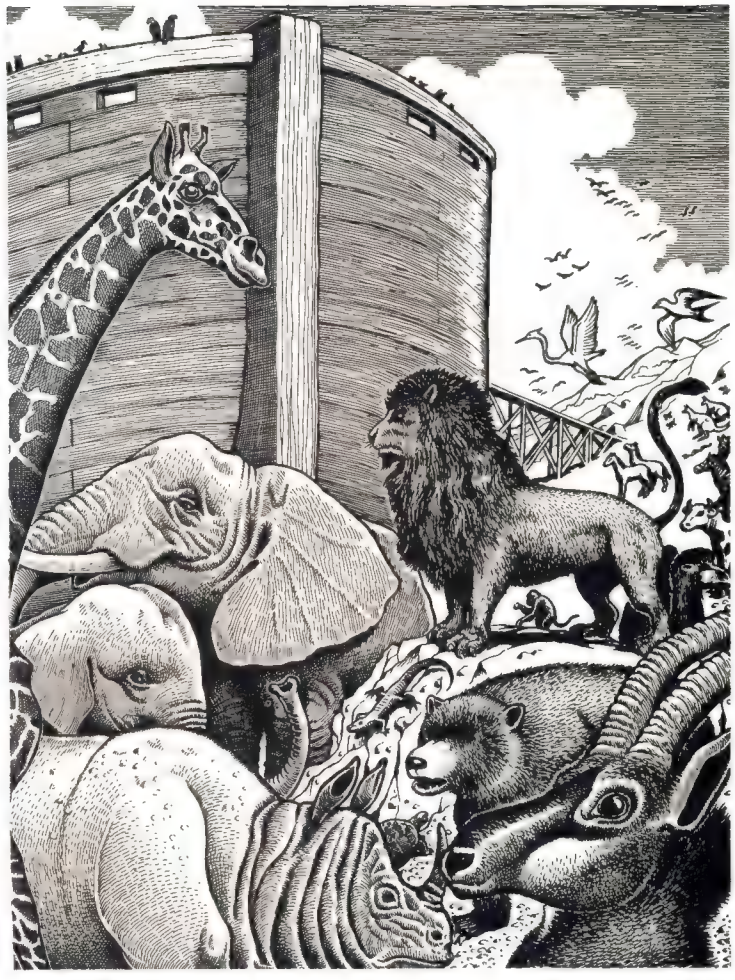
NOAH BUILDS THE ARK!

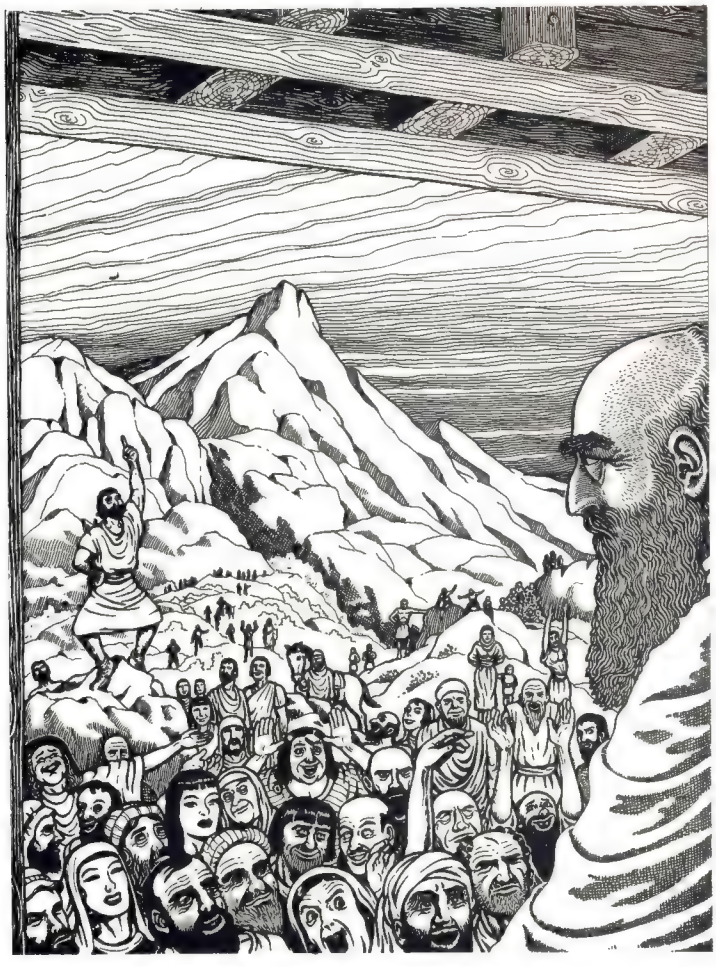


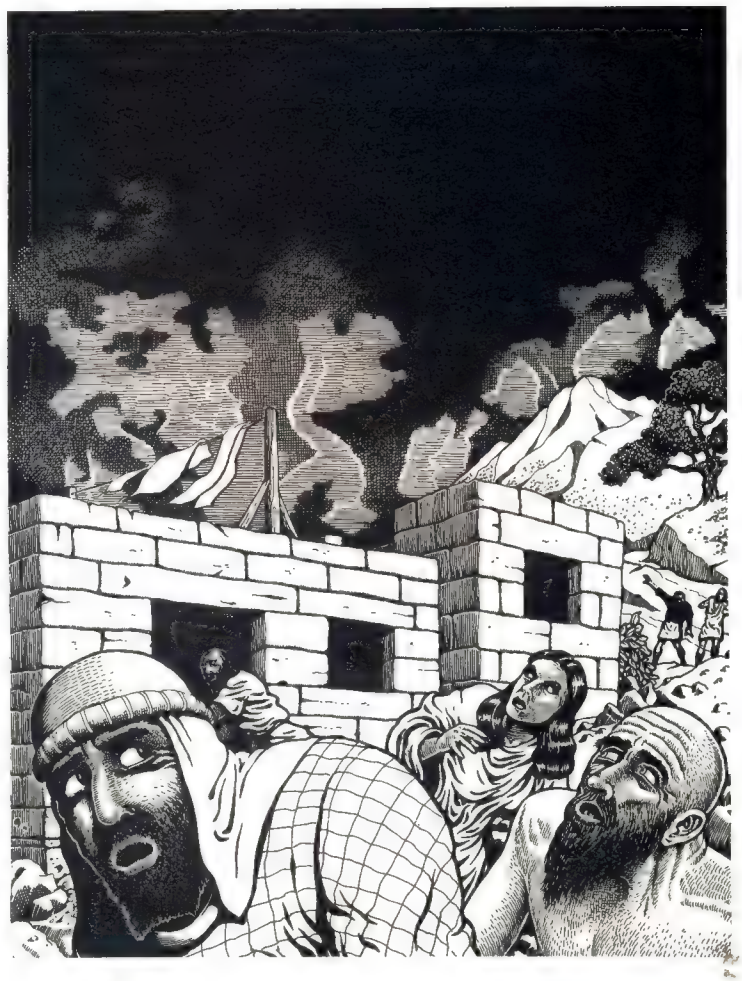


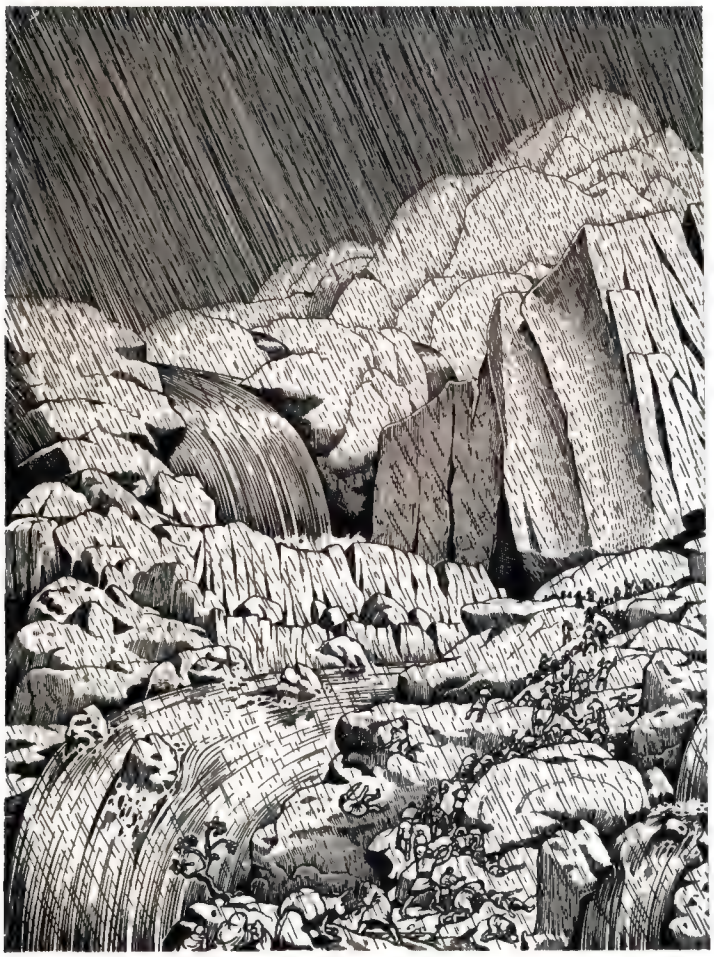


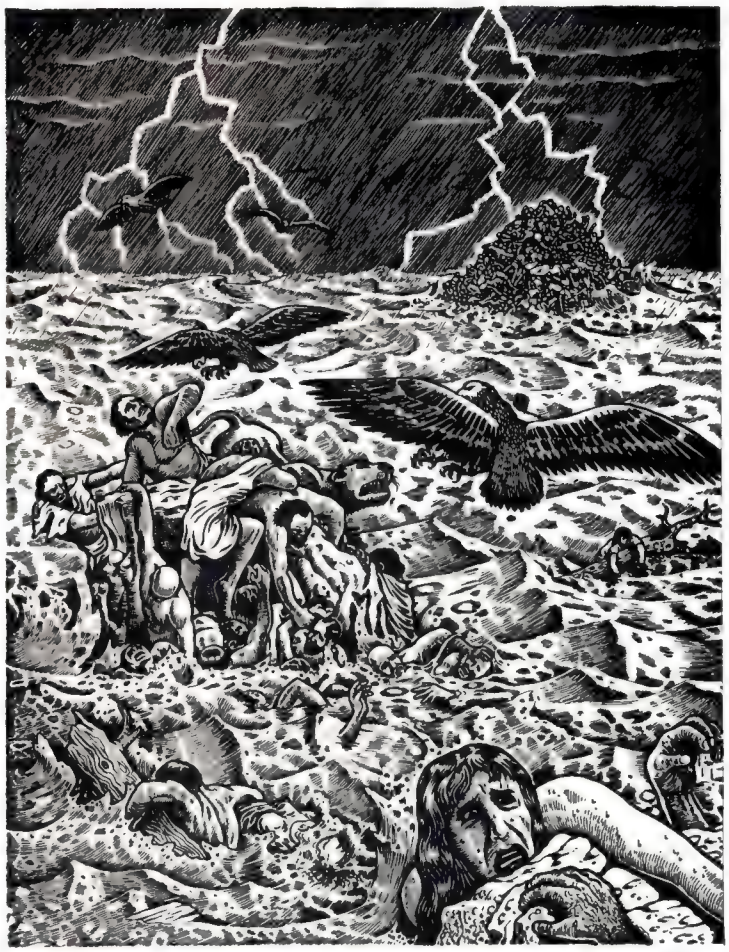


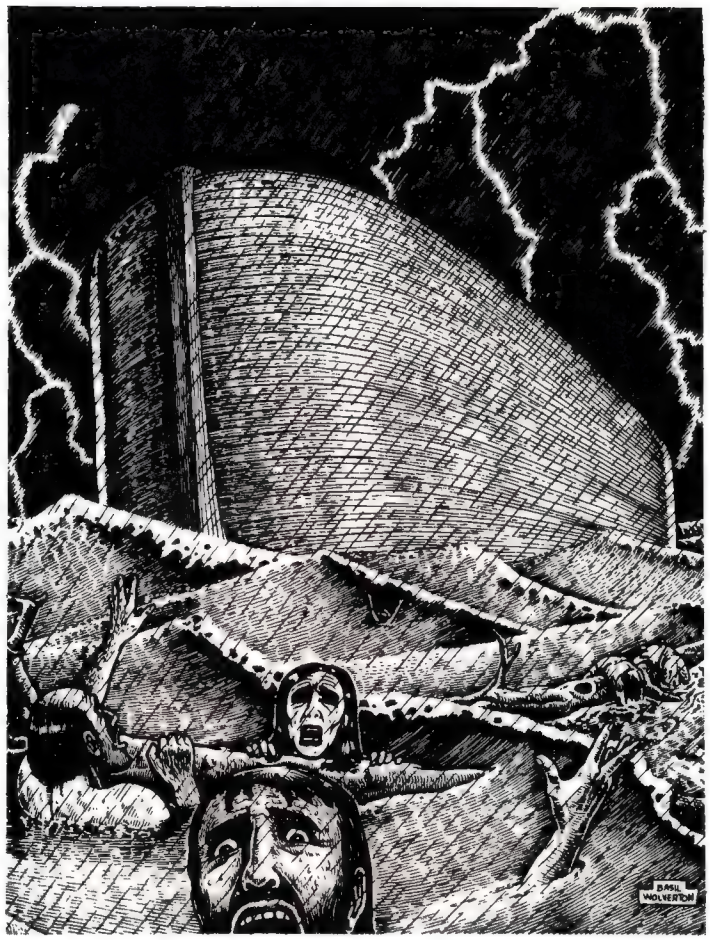








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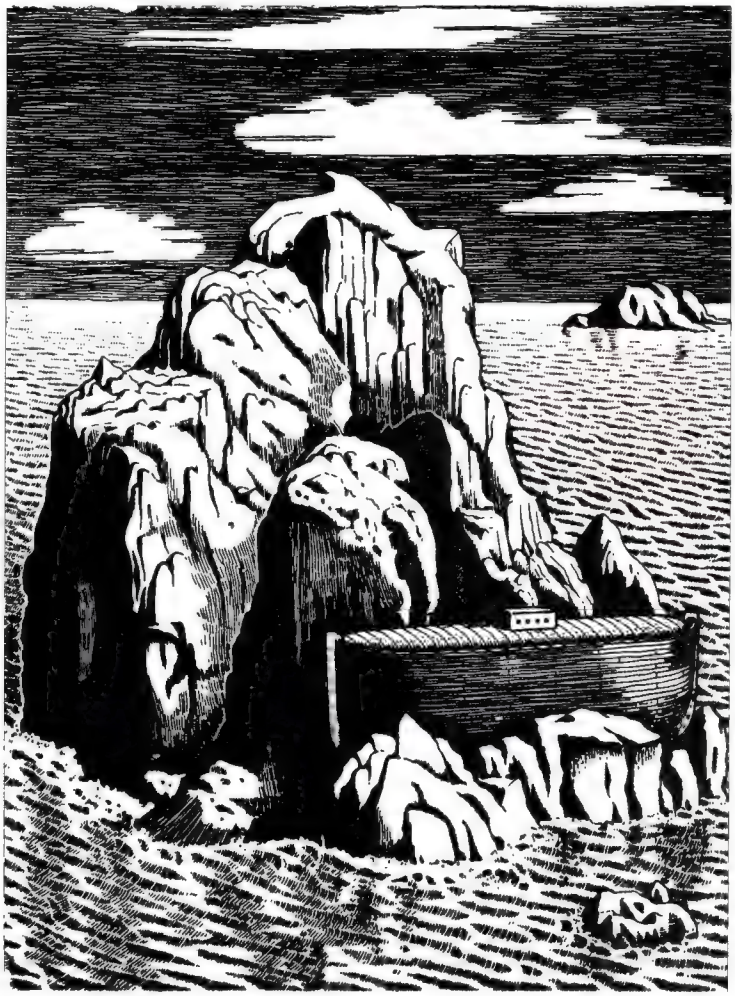
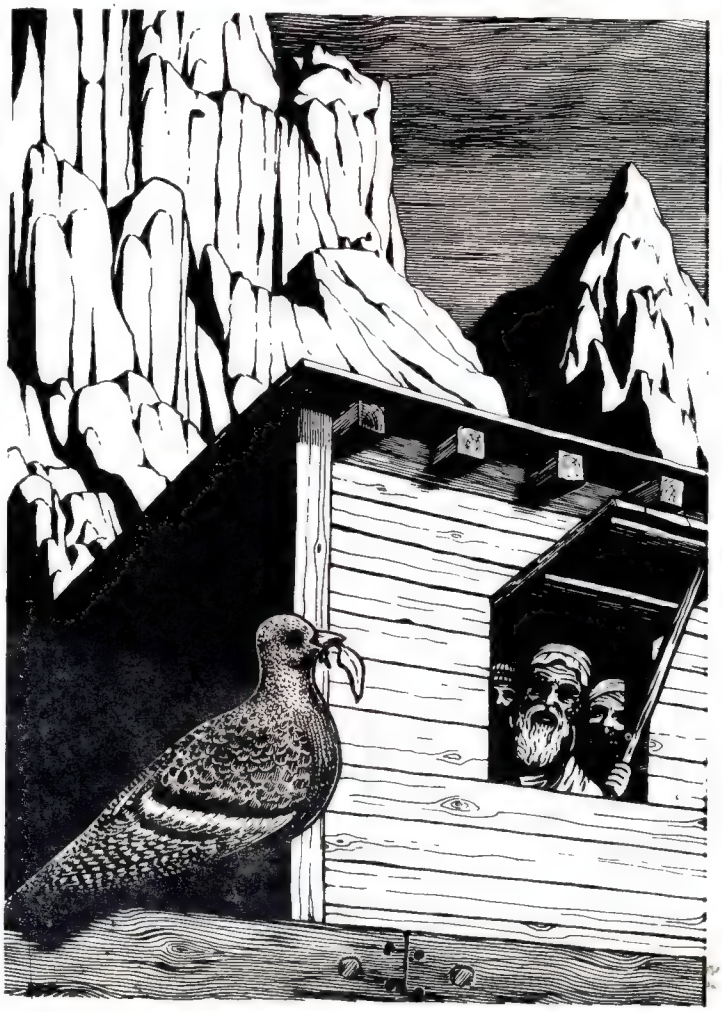
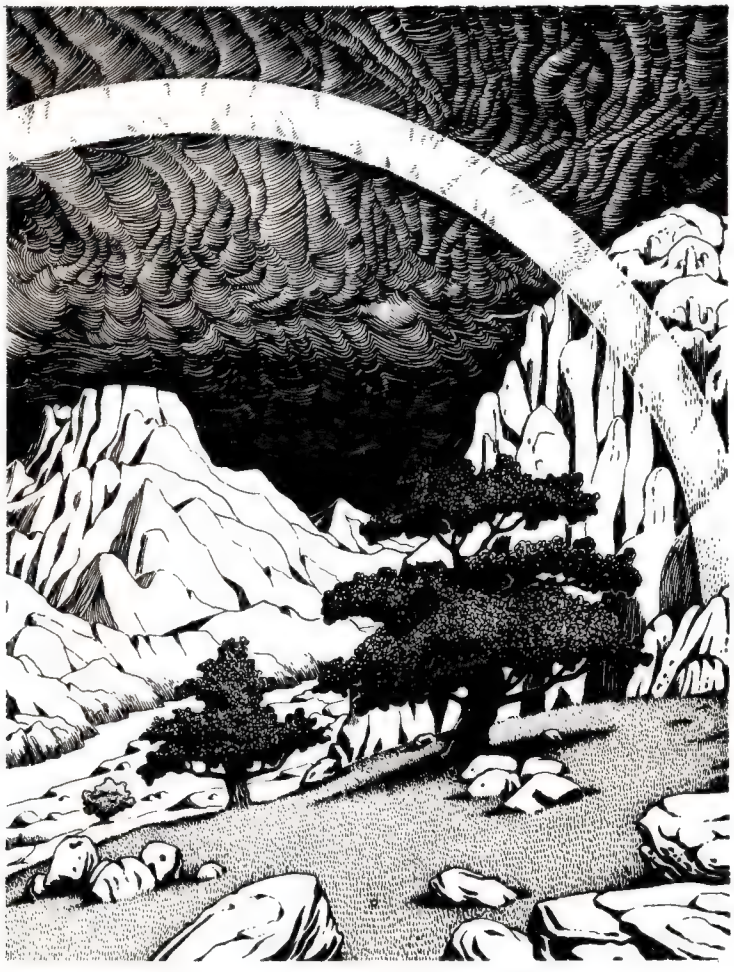
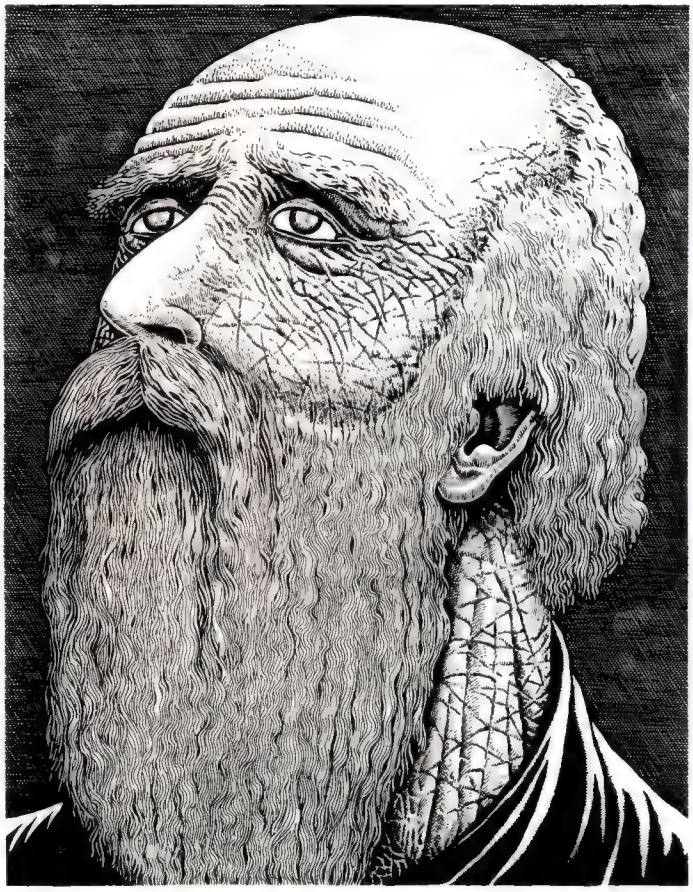


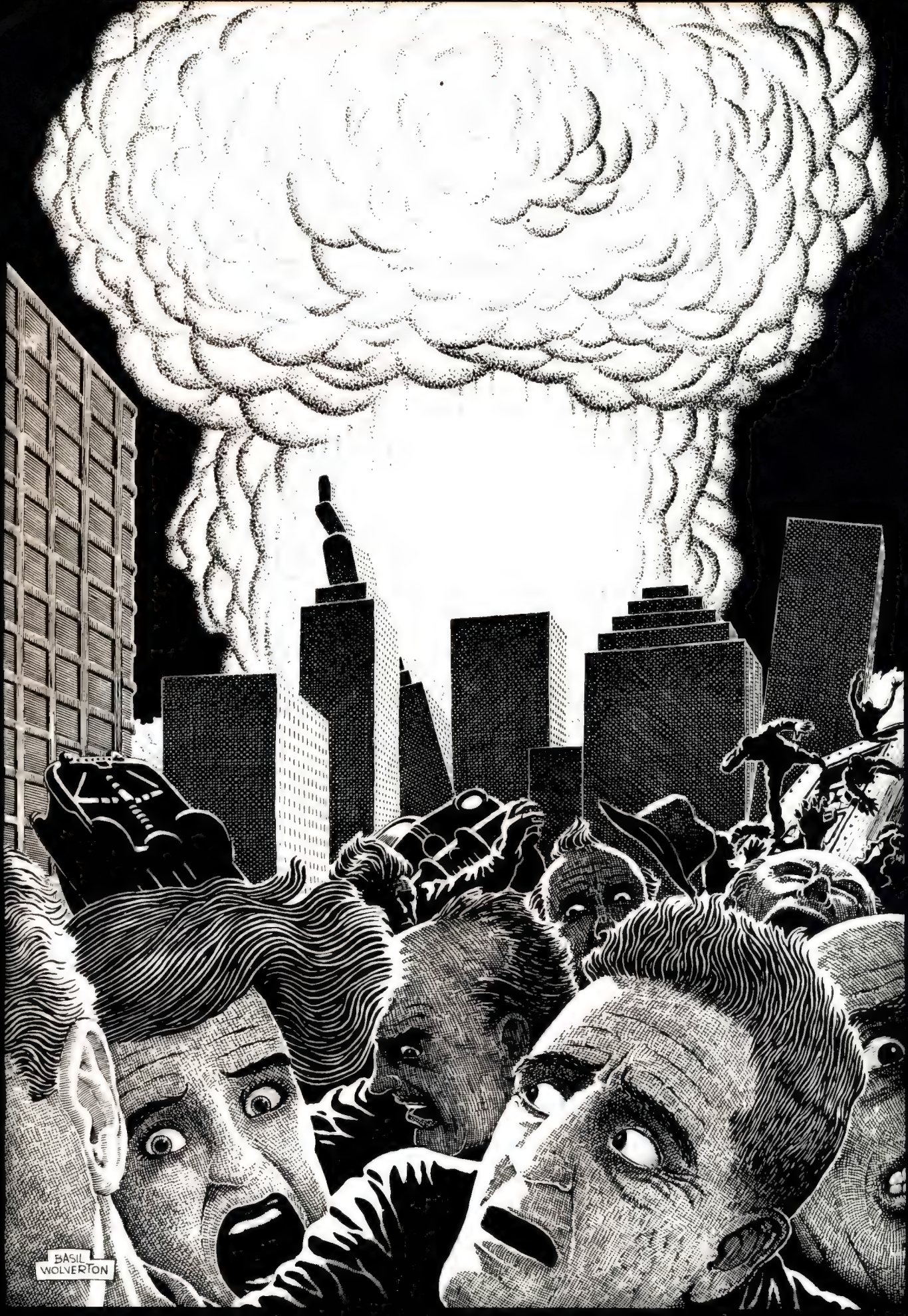






"And all the days of Noah were 950 years; and he died."

The Prophecies of the Book of REVELATION at last are revealed! The closed, sealed prophecies are opened. Here is a startling, eye-opening booklet, dynamically illustrated by nationally famous artist Basil Wolverton, vividly picturing before your eyes the catastrophic events soon to bring the END OF THE WORLD!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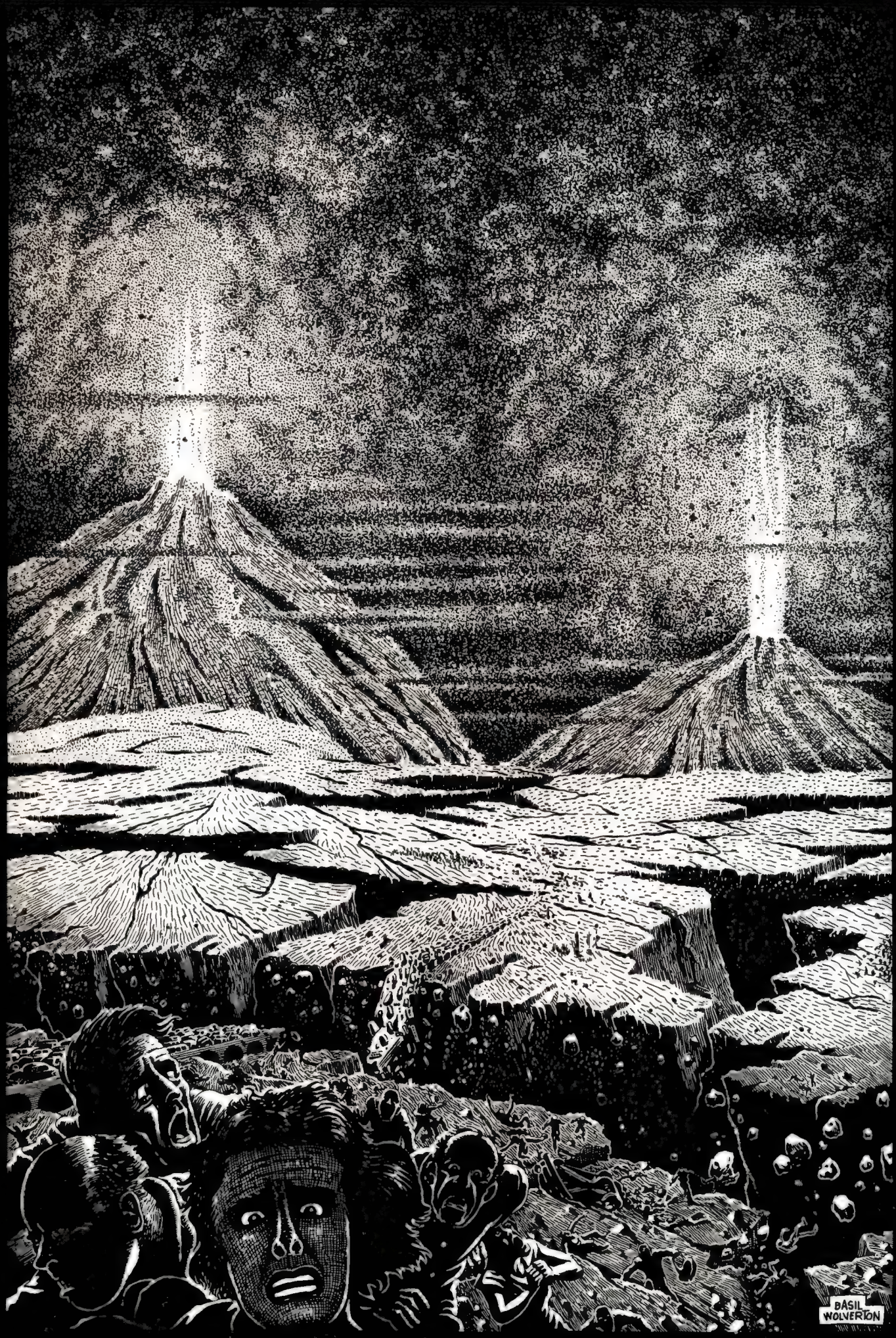
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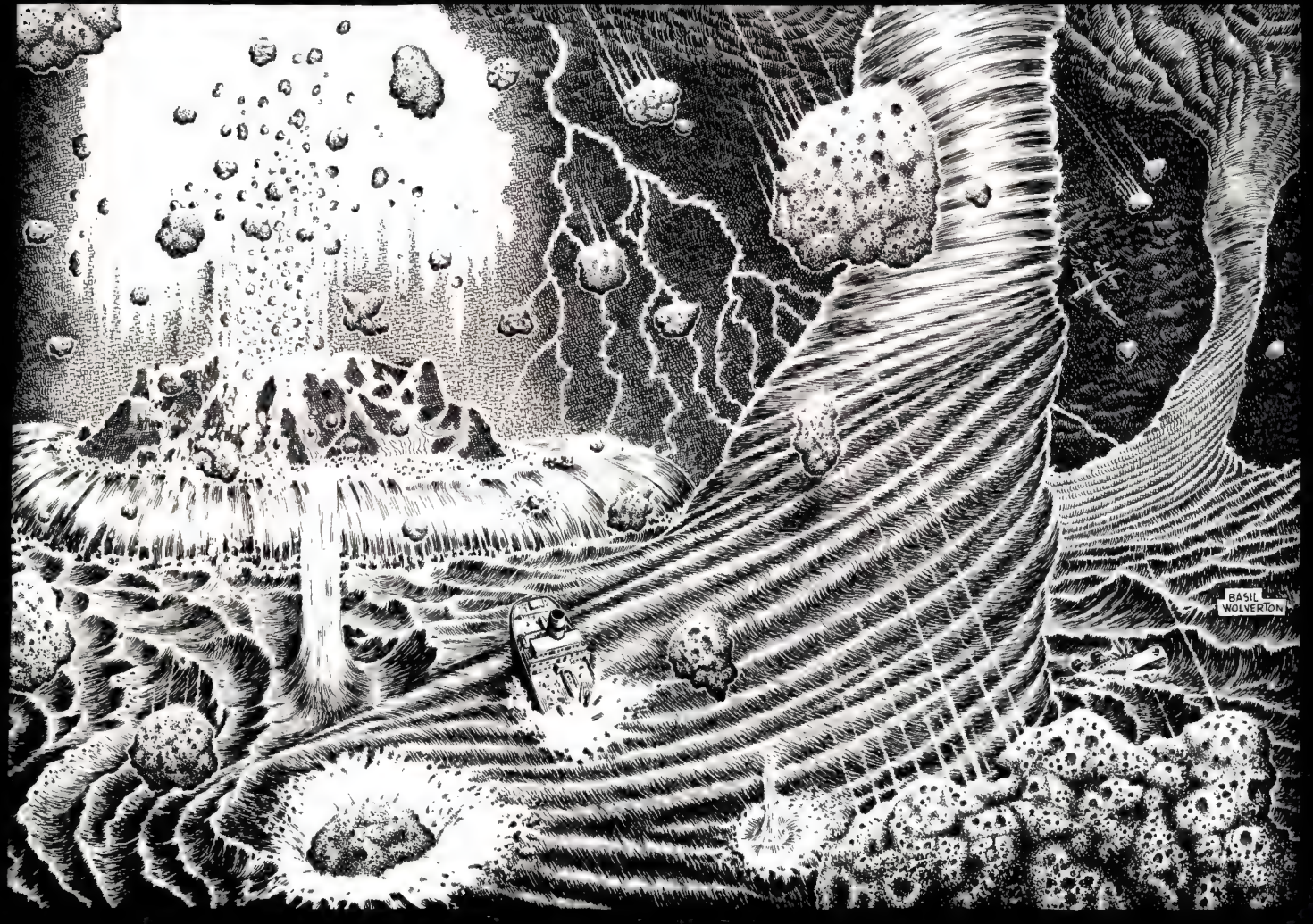
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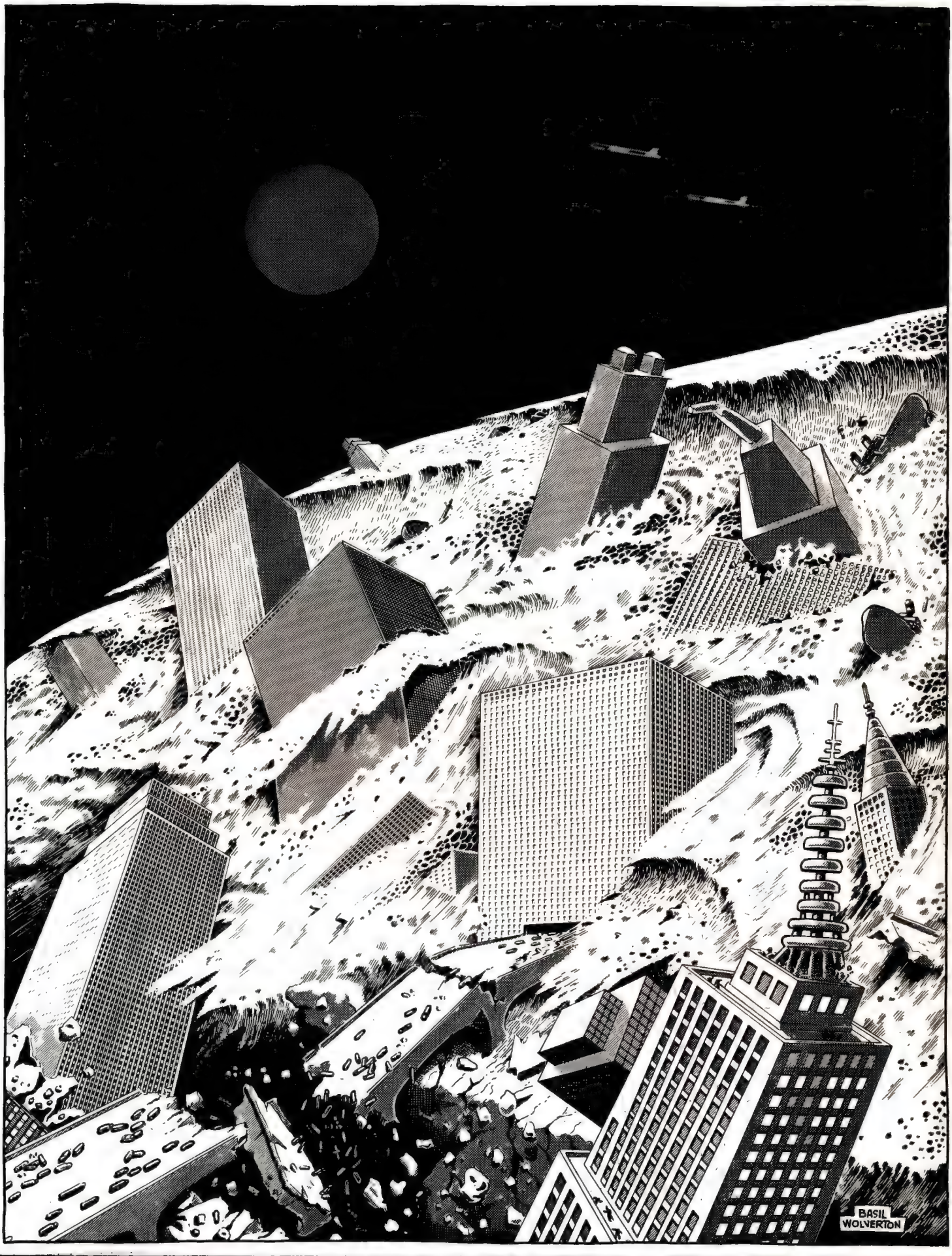
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WOLVERTON
FOR GLENN E. BRAY
1971

HARVEY KURTZMAN: "For me, Wolverton always had an integrity of style and effort. Though never aesthetic, his style was always consistent, always pure Wolverton. He never borrowed, never hacked and he never short-changed his public. And this is a good deal of the reason why he is what few of his contemporaries can claim. Wolverton is an original."

GINGER ROGERS: "Thank you for the most unusual caricature of me which you sent. It is intriguing. I cannot honestly say I think it is flattering -- but caricatures rarely are! Thank you for your kind thoughts of me and my work."

JACK BENNY: "Thanks very much for the caricature. I thought it was swell. In fact, it is the best one I have ever seen of me."

GAHAN WILSON: "Of course I think Basil Wolverton's work is magnificent. What macabre cartoonist wouldn't? And of course he has been an influence. No small child exposed to his drawings, and I was a small child exposed to his drawings, could ever be expected to walk in a straight line again. Or vote a party ticket. I think Wolverton's vision of the human physiognomy and the human back of the head is unique and absolutely ghastly. I am sure in day to day life Wolverton is not a lycanthrope but a kind and gentle fellow, just as Boris Karloff was reputed to be, but I want to be armed the first time I meet him."

JULES FEIFFER: "I don't like his work. I think it's ugly."

STAN LEE: "Basil is one of the most original, unpredictable talents in the field. His style is unique and virtually inimitable -- and I've never known anyone who didn't get a real kick out of Basil's far-out artwork."

JERRY DeFUCCIO: "Before it was announced that the Oscar prototype was to be named the 'Shazam,' it seemed most natural to me that it should rightfully be named the 'Basil.'

Basil never had it easy in the comics. One of his initial disappointments was the dropping of his accepted MARCO OF MARS strip ('a pseudo-science feature') just at the time a rival syndicate launched BUCK ROGERS. MARCO was scrapped because it was considered unethical to run a newspaper strip that resembled another -- in those days.

Basil had two features in CIRCUS COMICS, published in 1938. After a few issues the magazine failed. In classic understatement and resignation, Basil opines: 'Perhaps the format was to blame. It was twelve panels to a page, a maddening rule even for a Lilliputian stamp designer.'

For the next decade, Basil turned out some thirty - three different features appearing under more than fifty different comic book titles.

Basil was at a distinct disadvantage, doing all his work on the western slope and mailing it east. Once, when he 'stumbled into New York,' he was shocked to learn that one or two publishers were paying him only the going rates for art. What should have been paid him for package jobs, stories and lettering, had been conveniently 'overlooked.'

GRAPHIC STORY MAGAZINE has more than provided the base for the 'Basil' award. Someday, I'd like to donate the figurine."

GRAPHIC STORY MAGAZINE INTERVIEW:

Basil Wolverton

Do you really have a vivid memory of charging up San Juan Hill with Teddy Roosevelt?

Of course that was a rumor to suggest that I'm an older man. I did not ride up San Juan Hill with Roosevelt. My horse was too old to make the grade. I had to stay at the bottom of the hill and watch.

Can you remember the first drawings you made and what they depicted?

They were made at age four, and depicted, by circles and ovals, various kinds of human beings, mostly fat ones. An imaginative psychiatrist would have drooled over the drawings. The first drawings for pay were done seven years later. Once a week I would make a likeness of some popular comic strip character for fifty cents a cartoon. These were displayed at the local farmers' market. I've always felt that I was cheating the man who paid me.

Which artists, if any, had the biggest influence in shaping your style?

My style started before I was aware of the styles of real artists -- age four. And it hasn't changed too much, as some of my critics will agree. I never had any formal art training. Later, I admired the work of Rube Goldberg. Still later, that of Alex Raymond. Then Roy Crane and Walt Kelly. There was no concerted effort to emulate the styles of these fellows, though I would like to be as fine an artist as Alex Raymond was. My style, if it is a style, developed about like one's handwriting, which can sometimes be unintelligible to others.

I was never conscious of trying to whomp up a style even mildly different until the late forties. Possibly it was a case of trying to keep my work from not looking like that of others, even though theirs was superior. Gradually I became aware that my way of drawing was a little different. Until then, there wasn't much effort to polish it in the direction I'd taken.

When and where was your first work published?

Nationally, in AMERICA'S HUMOR -- a contemporary of COLLEGE HUMOR -- in 1926. The material was in two different issues, a playlet in one, and a cartoon in the other. The cartoon showed a surgeon chopping a man in two with an ax. I was off to a delightful start.

This was your first job?

I didn't start out to be a cartoonist, no. I had always wanted to entertain, and one of my earliest jobs was as a performer in vaudeville. It wasn't difficult to break into vaudeville, inasmuch as I had good contacts because of my job as staff artist on a daily newspaper, the Portland NEWS. I was booked nights at various theaters in Oregon and Washington, thereby hastening vaudeville's death just before sound equipment was installed in movie theaters. The ever-changing act included accompanying myself on a baritone uke while imitating singing, after which there was imitation tap dancing. At nineteen, one isn't ordinarily concerned about appearing too hammy. I didn't have any certain lines, except song lyrics, but preferred to make the most of people or props that were present. If I could make a few people laugh, others would join -- perhaps to try and prove that they, too, were too discerning to allow any fancied or possible subtlety of humor to escape them. It was fun, even on off nights, and it was good for me because I was really a reticent person who had to almost force himself on stage, and who couldn't function like an extrovert until he could feel that pleasant, foggy - blue glow from the stage lights.

As for the Portland NEWS, besides being the staff artist, I had a regular beat -- hotels -- w r o t e special features, did rewrites and covered occasional news assignments. On one occasion the managing editor -- the city editor didn't like me, and we were rarely on speaking terms -- sent me over to City Hall to sketch an accused murderer who had just been jailed. The newspaper photographer wasn't available, probably being asleep in some speakeasy. The arrested man wouldn't pose through the bars for me to sketch him, so they locked me in the cell with him. I never did get a good gander at his face. When the drawing came out on the front page that afternoon, it somehow looked more like me than the unwilling subject.

What, then, made you decide to become a cartoonist?

My first thoughts concerning a profession favored being an actor, preferably a comedian. Eventually I heard or read that a two-bit actor earns even less than a two-bit cartoonist. Later, there were times when I wondered how that could be possible. Like everything else, cartooning has its headaches and obstacles, but it has more advantages than disadvantages. The one I like best is that I have the time and freedom to look for a job for my wife whenever she gets out of one.

Did you ever do any illustration or writing for the pulp magazines?

I submitted three or four stories while in my twenties. All were returned. The editor of one publication said he would accept the manuscript I sent him if I would polish it up a little. It was prune season at the cannery where I was making a living, and I didn't have time for polishing, so I didn't f o l l o w through.

What's the story on your almost going to work for the Disney Studio in 1936 to work on SNOW WHITE?

I was living in Hollywood then. Disney advertised for help in many newspapers just prior to starting SNOW WHITE. The ad stated that prospects should have had experience in writing, vaudeville, and should have the capabilities to direct the making of a motion picture. Of course this left out about everyone in the world, but I reasoned that two years on a Portland daily and my limited vaudeville experience might qualify me. There was nothing to lose. I had come to Hollywood to work on a magazine published by Charles Ray, a star of silent movies. (His editor and I clashed immediately when the editor attempted to filch some of my cartoons.) About 1,800 persons responded to the Disney ads in west coast newspapers. One was hired. I wasn't among that one. A couple of years later I was invited to apply again, but didn't. The Mickey Mouse strip I had done as a sample.

How did you get the assignment to do your first stories in CIRCUS COMICS in 1938?

On a trip to New York I'd left samples with United Features Syndicate. Months later, in 1937, Monte Bourjaily, former manager of United, formed his own newspaper fea-

ture syndicate, called Globe, planning to pick his cartoon features by first establishing them through his own comic book, CIRCUS COMICS. He asked me to contribute, and later accepted two of my features, SPACEHAWKS and DISK EYES, which appeared in the first issue. SPACEHAWKS, plural, had nothing to do with the SPACEHAWK published later by Curtis, or Novelty Press, in TARGET. These two features ran in CIRCUS until the mag folded with issue number three. The reason it folded so early, I think, was because there was too much crammed on each page. Bourjaily didn't want the same name on more than one feature, which is why I used the pseudonym "Dennis Langdon" for DISK EYES.

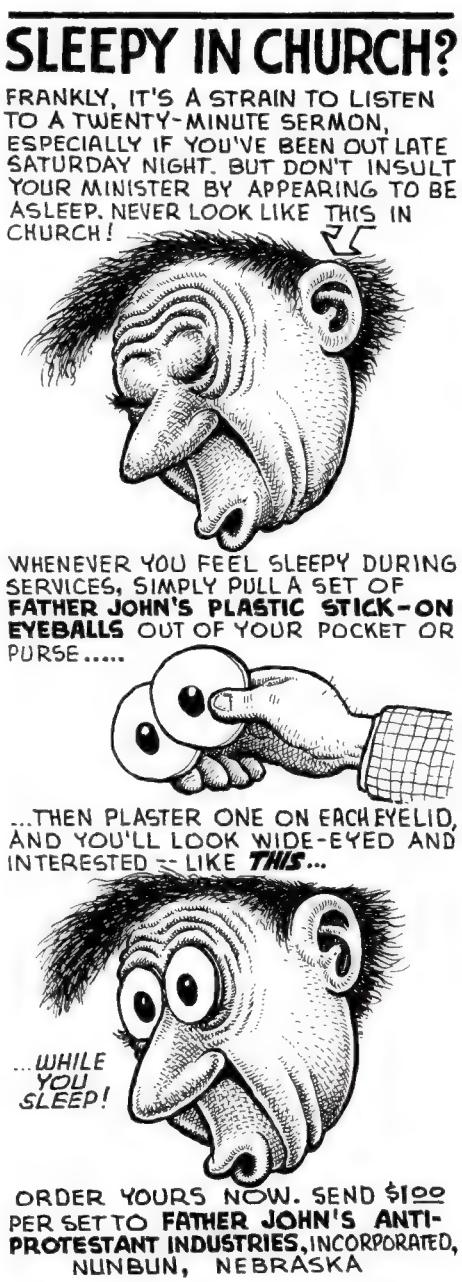
What came next?

In 1939 AMAZING MYSTERY FUNNIES used a wild, weird thing called SPACE PATROL for almost a year. Then, SPACEHAWK started in 1940 with issue number five of TARGET, and ran thirty issues, or two and a half years. It was the feature strip in the book for a while during the period of nightmare-type comics. The PTA and other such groups yelped until some of the more conservative publishers -- and that included Novelty Press -- toned down their material. Then came the war, and the editor wanted to bring Spacehawk down to earth and keep him there. I had the nerve to argue with him that it would kill the strip. But the publisher wanted it that way, and when he passed his sentiments on to me, I knew Spacehawk's future was doomed, inasmuch as the fantastic element was what made it popular. Anyone with only two brain cells would have known that an interplanetary feature couldn't survive under such a change. It took the zip from the strip to relegate the character to ordinary Earth backgrounds, and so he lasted only a short while thereafter. Within a few months the strip had lost all its appeal and was shoved out. Editors and publishers don't always know best. For a few issues SPACEHAWK was the lead feature in TARGET, but only while it was wildly interplanetary. I was convinced, and still am, that young readers lap up powerfully imaginative stories. Their imaginations are generally strong, and the stuff fits in.

As for the never-published episodes, "Dr. Gore" did come back, and somewhat of a mess. I intended to have him reappearing at intervals of about eight months, and each time more intense on getting rid of the hero. As for "Dork," I guess I did get him killed off. I'm not too sure. It's the penalty for having too much stuff going at one time. I was doing so many strips at one point that the characters all began to look like my wife, who, of course, I see more of than anyone. Or if I didn't, I wouldn't admit it.

The editor of Novelty Press had told me that he intended to put out a book of high adventure strips after the wartime newsprint curtailment was over. He mentioned that I would do one story for that book -- possibly even revive SPACEHAWK. However, I intended to stick to so-called humor. It was easier for me to do.

After CIRCUS, AMAZING MYSTERY FUNNIES and TARGET, sales came thick and fast. By 1942 there was more than I could handle. I'd started POWERHOUSE PEPPER, among others. At one point I worked seven days a week for seven months, and still couldn't keep up. The rates back then were so miserable that one couldn't afford time out. About the only time I saw my wife was when she came into the studio with a scoop shovel to clean out the deep accumulation of eraser particles.


SLEEPY IN CHURCH?
FRANKLY, IT'S A STRAIN TO LISTEN TO A TWENTY-MINUTE SERMON, ESPECIALLY IF YOU'VE BEEN OUT LATE SATURDAY NIGHT. BUT DON'T INSULT YOUR MINISTER BY APPEARING TO BE ASLEEP. NEVER LOOK LIKE THIS IN CHURCH!
WHENEVER YOU FEEL SLEEPY DURING SERVICES, SIMPLY PULL A SET OF FATHER JOHN'S PLASTIC STICK-ON EYEBALLS OUT OF YOUR POCKET OR PURSE.....
...THEN PLASTER ONE ON EACH EYELID, AND YOU'LL LOOK WIDE-EYED AND INTERESTED -- LIKE THIS...
...WHILE YOU SLEEP!
ORDER YOURS NOW. SEND $1.00 PER SET TO FATHER JOHN'S ANTI-PROTESTANT INDUSTRIES, INCORPORATED, NUNBUN, NEBRASKA

You mean you had to go without sleep?

No, I could just pitch forward on the drawing board. How do you think I got this flat face?

Have you always written your own stories and created your own characters, or have you sometimes worked with writers?

I've always illustrated my own stories with the exception of three or four for Martin Goodman. That wasn't good, because I didn't think the way the writers did. I really don't know if they were disappointed or gratified. I don't imagine things in the same way that the author does, and his imagination might be superior to mine, in which event I wouldn't really do justice to his story. I can get along better with my own miserable imagination and without any arguments, misunderstandings and gripes. Apparently the editor was satisfied. But if an artist can do his own stories, jolly harmony results.

One of those collaborations was "One of Our Graveyards is Missing," which appeared in an early fifties issue of JOURNEY INTO UNKNOWN WORLDS. It was written by Daniel Keyes, whom I don't know, but whom I'm told has gone on to become a well known science fiction author.

What kind of fans were there in the forties and fifties? Did you get much fan mail?

Fans at that time, as today, went in for deep criticism of the comics. I liked it. All of us could have done better -- starting with the editors.

Writing and cartooning go together. It was a bit disappointing to see in New York, around the publishers' offices, fellows who were capable of doing only one thing. It was, and is, the age of specialists, but it's far better to be able to do several things than just one, as long as one can do them well.

In the cases of those strips of other artists that consisted of what a fan of mine termed "big blobs of ink," I found that a lot of those artists responsible were part and parcel of the publishing business, or at least close friends of editors and publishers, and did about as they pleased. Volume was their byword, and they knew that several thousands would buy the stuff, regardless of how lousy it was.

Critics had an eye peeled for comics that did the wrong thing, and most criticism I received was very constructive. If every one out of ten comic mag readers would've been as critical, the standard of the stuff would probably have risen sharply. But then, perhaps I would have been kicked out. I realize my art isn't good. It's just a type of art and humor, and is pretty low-brow and slapstick. But I do feel it's just as funny as some of the other strips, including one or two syndicated ones.

Have you ever been interested in doing a newspaper strip?

Several times. The first was in 1929. It was a crude thing called MARCO OF MARS. Surprisingly, it was accepted by the Independent Syndicate in New York. While it was being prepared to present to newspapers, I joyously -- one does things more or less joyously at age twenty -- pitched in to draw a backlog of strips. Just before that a new strip by the name of BUCK ROGERS had come out. Its setting was in Mexico hundreds of years in the future. Suddenly Mr. Rogers decided to go to Mars, flags flying from his ship as he sped through space. It was evident that Marco and Buck were going to arrive about the same time at Mars. This greatly disturbed the manager of the Independent Syndicate. He didn't wish it to appear that we were trying to steal or imitate an idea, so he dropped the strip.

And in 1938 my DISK EYES THE DETECTIVE was chosen by the new Globe Syndicate in New York. It took on too many features prematurely, and collapsed.

In 1943 United Features offered me a contract to do a strip about a reporter, SCOOP SCUTTLE. Just when the ad sheets were sent out, there was a newsprint cutback because of the war. Scuttle was scuttled for newspapers, but ended up in one of Lev Gleason's comic books. The first episode or two were in SILVER STREAK. SCOOP SCUTTLE as of 1945 or so in the Timely Comics was made up of the same newspaper strips, too, which is why my signature appears so often at the bottom of various panels. I'd hoped to have SCOOP SCUTTLE or a strip titled HAP YAP-TRAP running in newspapers before my social security payments came due and I lost all interest in working for a living, but the increasing paper shortage kept things postponed until conditions improved. Which they didn't.

As of 1947, SCOOP SCUTTLE was scuttled. Magazine House held the rights, and the editor of its books had seen to it that Scoop wouldn't get back. He was only an ordinary cartoonist at a time when Scoop shoved some of his stuff out, and he didn't forget it when he later came into power.

SCOOP SCUTTLE was better for 4-page stuff than the 4-page POWER-HOUSE PEPPER strips were. I put more work into the thing. I could hardly do it with Powerhouse because of the volume, though that was a lousy excuse.

The majority of your art in comic books was in the Timely Comics of the forties, and your best-known character was Powerhouse Pepper. The humor in Powerhouse was closer to burlesque than pure satire, wasn't it?

Right, but neither was it pure burlesque because Powerhouse didn't have baggy pants.

How about some background on Powerhouse Pepper and the early Timely Comics?

Timely Comics, of the middle forties, apparently tossed all strips into a barrel, and then the editor, Stan Lee, grabbed and used whatever he got in no particular book. I was never able to make a lot of sense out of their publishing policies. To even matters, though, they were never able to make much sense out of what they bought from me.

In the early part of '47 I was in New York, and I learned that Martin Goodman, Timely's publisher, wanted to change all his mags over to gal stuff. TESSIE, HEDY, NELLIE THE NURSE, and so on. The change didn't affect me an awful lot until a few months later. First, my Powerhouse Pepper strips were cut down to four pages each. And, in some issues of JOKER, Powerhouse was omitted en-

NUMBSKULLS IN THE NEWS :: The Right Reverend T. Sidney Slupp, who contends that all religion can be expressed simply in good manners, is shown with his wife at the Snort Club. Reverend Slupp, who abhors people who crouch over their food, is imbibing his soup through slightly distended lips he has developed over the years for that purpose.

"Why don't people sit up straight at the table -- like this?" the Reverend mumbled to reporters.

Reporters were unable to make their replies heard above the din.

tirely. I'd heard that Powerhouse fans wrote to Stan Lee and put in a big kick. It was a matter of life or death with Powerhouse. Perhaps also to me. He was a good source of revenue that I couldn't afford to go without. Furthermore, he was my favorite creation, and I really felt bad at the prospect of losing him, even though I could put out other strips to make up for the loss financially. I would have rather done Powerhouse at reduced rates than do other strips for higher rates.

But, eventually, Powerhouse not only came back stronger and longer, but POWERHOUSE PEPPER COMICS was revived. The second issue was on the stands around January of 1948. The first issue had come out in 1943. I had to thank the loyal Powerhouse fans for writing in to Martin Goodman and Stan Lee congratulating them for putting out a very fine and humorous book -- regardless of how lousy the fans thought it might be. My longest cartoon strip happens to be a Powerhouse -- sixteen pages.

Around 1947 I didn't have too many new strips in the works. I had three or four outlined, but was too busy at the time to do a great deal with them. Moreover, the paper shortage was so serious then that it was the worst of times to start anything new. Most all publishers had tossed stuff out, and had cut down on buying. It was really the worst it'd been up to that time. That same year, COMIC COMICS and IBIS were out. Every publisher was tearing his hair. Each expected the other to go up to fifteen cents per book, but no one was willing to pioneer the lead. No publisher trusted another. The result was bringing all books down to close to 32 pages, with artists and writers roaming New York in search of work. It was the worst condition for comics in years -- or since they'd started. Besides the fact that paper was scarce, it had almost doubled in price since the end of the war.

By early 1948 I was drawing for only two publishers, Timely and Fawcett. Otherwise, I was doing stuff for two ad agencies, one in Portland, the other in Hollywood. Stuff for these agencies, caricatures, appeared in several national radio trade magazines, and in about eighty newspapers in the southwest. I also did caricatures for Universal-International Studios in Hollywood, and for Samuel Goldwyn Productions. This kept me running up and down between here and Hollywood and made me forego my annual trip to New York that year. I was disappointed, but there was too much to do for the studios. The stuff for the movies appeared in newspapers all over the country, wherever various movies were advertised.

Most of your caricature assignments came from the work you did for LIFE magazine and the Lena the Hyena contest. What's the story behind that?

In 1946 United Features launched a newspaper promotion plan in the form of a contest in which the readers of LI'L ABNER were invited to submit drawings of Lower Slobbovia's ugly woman, Lena the Hyena. According to reports later, it turned out to be a huge success, what with local prizes also having been awarded by newspapers carrying

the strip. Just previous to this I had submitted caricatures to LIFE. I was told that they were being considered for a spread. Instead, LIFE later used pictures of Lena, using most of the space on my winning version, which was by far the tamest of my seven entries. The final choices were made by Salvador Dali, Boris Karloff and Frank Sinatra.

After that, articles concerning me stated in effect that because of the Lena contest a cartoon career had suddenly came into existence for me. This was news to me. I'd been drawing comics for national magazines for nine years, and had been a professional cartoonist for twice that long. LIFE later published two spreads of my work, for a total of five pages.

The $525 awarded was a relatively small amount for a contest of such magnitude. But for the next year or two, after LIFE publicized the event with its cover shot of Lena, there was much caricature work to be done. Among the buyers was a national radio network, the movie studios and several advertising agencies. At long last I was able to afford an eraser for each hand and a real drawing board of my own. This was a happy event for my wife, who resented my working on her ironing board -- especially when she was ironing.

In the Lena contest, I didn't win first prize in the Portland area. I won second, for twenty-five dollars. But I was awfully busy trying to answer fan mail from the Lena thing nationally. In the end, I'm afraid I wasn't that much ahead, considering the fact that it required days and days to answer mail. But material things aren't all that count, and I was happy to have received so many communications from well-wishing people. I answered every one personally, even though it took me about six months, as I recall.

About my caricatures in LIFE. By referring to me as "An adherent of the spaghetti and meatball school of design," the editors meant that the stuff looks just like that. The name stuck. In fact, it was somewhat exaggerated, and the agencies I later worked for referred to me in their national ads as "The creator of the spaghetti and meatball school of art." At least it was better than being referred to as the father of Lena the Hyena.

Probably the widest-seen caricature you've done is that of John L. Lewis, which appeared in LIFE in 1947 as a double-page spread, along with smaller ones of Truman, Dewey and Stalin. Were these all done from photographs, memory, or just how did you go about creating them?

When making a caricature I get all the material possible, even to taking or getting 16mm movie close-ups and running them over and over. Of course that can't apply to people I can't get to, but there are generally plenty of photos available for celebrities. Caricatures come hard for me.

The Hancock Gasoline campaign of 1947 was also one of several opportunities that developed from the Lena contest. I'm told that the caricatures I did for them appeared on billboards in some parts of the country, but I never saw them in this area.

Incidentally, in the event you don't know where Vancouver is -- it was one of Henry Kaiser's shipyard towns -- it's just north across the Columbia River from Portland, Oregon. In case you don't know where Portland is, it's just south across the Columbia River from Vancouver, Washington. The river is between the two cities to keep the two chamber of commerce groups from fighting all the time.

Have you always been a freelancer, working this far from the main publishing centers?

I was strictly a freelance cartoonist. I have had contracts for several features, but the approach to them was on a freelance basis and I never had to move permanently from Vancouver. Contracts that tie up cartoonists so that they can't sell except to one publisher naturally push them out of the freelance category, which is not good unless one is bound to make a success in just one feature. My rating in that respect could have changed at any time -- though it didn't -- but it really didn't make a lot of difference except in newspaper syndicate contracts.

I did just one cover in the early '40s, TARGET #7, 1940. People who lived as far as I did from the publishers usually didn't get to draw covers. No one else lived as far away as I did. Publishers liked to have artists right under their thumbs at all times. That had its advantages for the artists, but I would rather have foregone those things and have more freedom otherwise.

As a successful freelancer, what kind of work schedule did you have?

Drawing one page a day was about right for me. I could make two under pressure, but it wasn't worth it. I put in a lot of detail. Some artists who slop their stuff out and draw only a few lines to a panel can get out four pages a day. Of course, if they ran out of work in a few days, there wasn't a lot of point in that except that it gave them an opportunity to wash the ink out of their hair. On newspaper strips, a strip a day was a cinch, for the drawing only. A lot of thought went into the drawings, though, and that took time. Inasmuch as I wrote and drew my stuff, my slow speed can't exactly be compared to artists' efforts in which no writing is involved on their parts. I did, and still do, everything myself. I used to think that when I started to slip downhill I'd call on someone to help. But I never did. There's nothing like doing a thing yourself if you want it done right, no matter how badly you may do it.

For fine lines I used a Gillotte Rigid Extra Fine 1068. Then sometimes a Gillotte 303, which has more spread. For thick lines I used to use a medium Speedball, but later I used that for lettering only, and bore down on my fine pen to make thick lines. It requires a bit of practice. Most sensible cartoonists use brushes, and go faster. With me, though, it's like learning to type. I know I could type faster if I would learn the right way, but I didn't want to take the time to

I could shoot myself for forgetting your birthday...

learn. So I'd bat the stuff out fairly fast with two fingers, something that stuck with me since reportorial days in 1928 and '29. Accordingly, I hated to start learning how to work faster with a brush.

Cartoon coloring I always left up to the publishers. Once in a while I'd suggest things, however, by a small note in blue pencil on the margin. The suggestions were always taken. As for the publishers informing the printers, they'd generally mark the color in blue pencil on the important objects, and the printers did the rest. Often, though, as you may have noticed, somebody wasn't very consistent.

Do you ever use a morgue?

Some of my readers not only think I should have one, but also that I should be in it. When I did the more serious type of strips, my morgue consisted of several years worth of LIFE magazine. I marked page numbers on the outside for certain things, and also had typed lists of what mags to refer to. Otherwise, I didn't have files full of photos, or the like.

What steps do you take in producing a drawing? Are you often or ever surprised at your finished works?

I sketch it out in pencil, use light pen lines, erase the pencil marks and ink in. I'm pleasantly surprised if it turns out what I consider well, not too surprised if it turns out a lot less than the preliminary imagination picture. If the positions of the characters are unusual I sometimes draw them in very rough style in pencil and then elaborate on that rough rough with a less rough rough. Of course everything is sketched out lightly in pencil, but I never follow the pencil lines, so sometimes I wonder why I bother.

Some people are not impressed by your art. Jules Feiffer, for instance.

We have something in common, because sometimes I don't like it either. Maybe we should get together sometime and run me down. Happily, for every Feiffer there are at least several who think otherwise.

A newspaper panel cartoonist once told me, "You make all those little lines to cover up your lack of ability." I was dazed. I had always hoped that viewers would regard it as shading, and didn't think that even another cartoonist would get wise to the awful truth.

People enjoy my work or they dislike it. There doesn't seem to be much middle ground. There used to be plenty of letters from protective parents who stoutly stated that they would never expose their children to such nightmare-producing pictures. Parents with neurotic kids over whom the same parents became neurotic because they thought their kids were neurotic weren't so critical of goofy stuff. But I've had what appeared to be normal adults tell me to my face that they wouldn't allow their offspring to as much as glance at the horrible looking faces I draw. Too bad. Frankly, I enjoy a good nightmare once in a while, and I think others could learn to like them as well.

But the great majority of letters contained more friendly remarks. I'm further encouraged by the awareness that the indignant ones whomped up more adrenalin to get them steamed up to a writing pitch. If the friendly readers and viewers got as excited, the unfriendly ones would always be snowed under.

Were you given a free hand in submitting your material? Or were you often asked to conform to certain editorial requirements?

There were hardly any restrictions to what I made for comic books. The only one that mattered had to do with SPACEHAWK.

Which editors were easiest to deal with?

The editors at Fawcett were friendliest. I didn't have to be reminded that they expected good quality. Stan Lee at Timely was very easy to work for. He didn't bother me with needless instructions and criticism, although most of my work for comics went through him. There were no arguments or differences of opinion with anyone by mail or whenever I went to New York.

Who are your favorite comic book artists?

Believe it or not, I don't have any.

Any favorites among newspaper strips?

OLD DOC YAK by Sidney Smith, who later drew THE GUMPS. OLD DOC YAK and HUNGRY HALLIE were my two favorite comic strips when I was very young. No one I've contacted remembers Hungry Hallie, who flew around in a cigar-shaped airplane looking for food from other airplanes. That was imagination back in the years

only
I dont have
a cork handy!

Hope your Birthday
was Happy!

before World War One. I used to like POPEYE, too, before the originator died, and when the strip was humorous. Among the adventure strips, I think BUZZ SAWYER and TERRY AND THE PIRATES were tops in their field. Today, I still admire the work of Roy Crane. And Walt Kelly, Al Capp, Johnny Hart, Ed Dodd, and PRINCE VALIANT. It's good to have such a variety of styles. It's like different kinds of music. There was a time when most of the comic book material began to look the same. It was discouraging. I could never have fitted in with that. As an untrained artist, it was beyond me.

Was E. C. Segar an influence in your work?

There was only admiration for his imagination.

What gave you the idea for rhyming dialogue that's become a trademark of your work?

It naturally developed because of my trying to dress up dialogue for my stuff.

Would you say that the cinema was an influence on your work?

Yes. I liked close-ups and details in movies. Also, the kind of exaggeration in things like the eating scenes by Chaplin, the wild facial expressions of Charlie Chase and eye-boogling of Harry Langdon.

Harvey Kurtzman once distinguished between satirical humor and what he called "dumb humor." He said that satire is the more thoughtful humor, and that dumb humor is "the humor that titillates the senses and plays around with clever juxtaposition and usage of words." By these definitions, would you say that your work in humor falls into the former or latter category? Have you done much of what you could call pure satire?

Probably a lot of my work was pure satire, but probably too much of it was what Kurtzman calls dumb humor. It also depends on the reader. Not everyone is a Kurtzman.

Which do you prefer doing -- cartooning, or more realistic art?

Cartooning. In cartoons one can go wild and people don't criticize because there are no definite limits shapewise to what one is drawing.

Is that why you didn't do any crime stories in the middle and late forties when they were so popular? Any particular reason for staying away from it?

I didn't do any cops-and-robbers crime stories because they just weren't up my alley. No fantasy. No humor. Also, it's my belief that realistic violence and sensationalism in comics is too near something the kids can emulate. They wouldn't be inclined to copy violence depicted in stories with completely unrealistic settings.

Some critics say you're not able to draw sexy-looking women, or even moderately good-looking ones. How do you feel about this?

Those some critics are probably r i g h t. My kind of distortion doesn't do much for the female figure. My men aren't very sexy, either. I don't think that specializing in that direction would help make my cartoons funnier.

Which do you feel is more important to a comic book story -- art or writing?

Writing. If it's a poor story, why waste pictures on it? On the other hand, what a shame to spoil a good story with lousy illustrations.

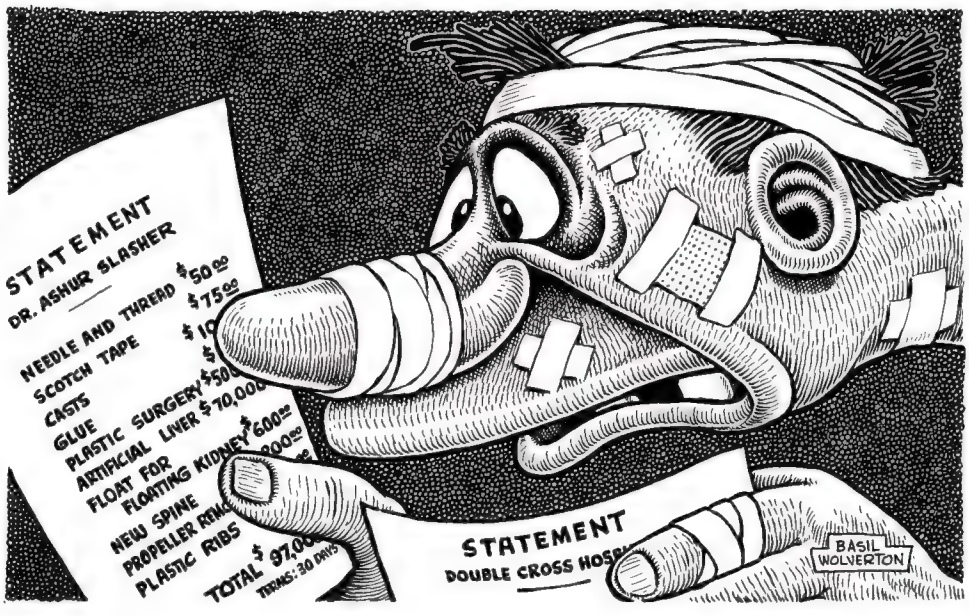
You've recommended WRITER'S DIGEST and the annual WRITER'S YEARBOOK to aspiring cartoonists, and, too, Montgomery Ward's catalogs as good starting points. Why?

I recommended those magazines for markets, but some remiss reporter included the catalog. The catalog was mentioned as a fine morgue for models of just about everything.

What about your radio shows?

Here was another case of doing something on the side because of liking it. I wrote my own scripts, did my own sound effects and several ridiculous voices. Not wishing to blurt out anything more absurd than the written lines, I stuck

"I'm an expert at outboarding thrills,
And I'm best when I'm boiled to the gills!"
Thus boasted McWart
As he finished a quart;
Now *he*'s finished -- except with his bills!



I'M TELLING YOU FOR THE LAST TIME — GET YOUR SOLDIERS OFF MY ISLAND -- OR ELSE!
OR ELSE WHAT? YOU'RE NOTHING BUT A BIG BAG OF BLUFF!
WELL--I'LL THINK OF SOMETHING! AH, YES! I'LL GO CALL A FRIEND OF MINE IN RUSSIA! HE'LL KNOW WHAT TO DO!
OH, NO!
A LITTLE LATER....
SO I'M BLUFFING, EH? TOO BAD YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT THE ACE I NOW HAVE UP MY SLEEVE -- THANKS TO ADVICE FROM MY RUSSIAN FRIEND!
YOU'RE STILL BLUFFING! YOU WOULDN'T DARE START ANYTHING!
THAT'S WHAT YOU THINK! JUST TRY ME AND SEE!
OKAY! I'M CALLING YOUR BLUFF! PUT UP OR SHUT UP!
THAT DOES IT! ONE MORE CRACK AND I'LL LET YOU HAVE IT!
SO LET ME HAVE IT! NOW!
AND IT'S SOMETHING YOU'D NEVER GUESS I HAVE!
ALL RIGHT, SMARTY! SO HERE'S THE ACE I TOLD YOU I HAD UP MY SLEEVE!
BASIL WOLVERTON

LINE PHOTOS BY JOE GRAY, USING POWERFUL TELESCOPIC LENS.

closely to scripts. Besides, it was often necessary to keep my eyes averted to ignore the fellows in the control room when they bobbed about like baboons to try and make me crack up into laughter.

I didn't make mailbags of money for any station, but the mail was on the happy side. No one resented the daily caricature I sent to some listener I didn't know, based on his or her handwriting.

Before the fifties I was on a radio program as the winner of some kind of contest. An arrogant announcer succeeded so well in throwing me that I left without my prize.

And in 1947 the northwestern division of CBS radio carried a half hour show during which me and my so-called career was the subject, all dramatized, with comments by myself in person. The originating station was KOIN in Portland. I hadn't been on the air since several months before, so it was good to get back to a mike for a whole half hour again. I'd had three seasons in radio several years back. It was fun, but one had to buck too many people who were willing to walk on your face for a step up. That was one advantage of cartooning, and doing it away from New York. Few legs were long enough to have reached me here.

What's the story behind BARFLIZE?

BARFLIZE was something I did for a Portland publisher at his request. The basid idea was his. The characters were mine, but not the captions. It sold very well locally and would have made a fine profit nationally. Unhappily, the man in charge became a bit too excited at the prospects, and loused up a nationwide promotion plan by becoming too ambitious. Before I realized it, he had sold all the booklets to a local book store. I ended up with one copy. The copyright wasn't mine, and there was nothing I could do to salvage what could have been a good thing. That shot my hopes for fenders for my bicycle.

Did you enjoy doing science fiction and horror comics in the early fifties?

Yes, but there were very few of them.

What is your evaluation of that period in comics, 1950 to 1954, and the formation of the Comics Code?

After 1951 or '52 I was mostly out of touch. Any evaluation of mine of that period would therefore be rather meaningless. I doubt that the formation of the CMAA was justified. However, I was heartened when the local CMAA movement was started -- Contracted Middles for Abdominal Artists.

Why did you leave the comic book field?

Rates were starting to drop for comic book material in the early fifties. Perhaps this was partly due to censorship. Even POWERHOUSE PEPPER was ruled as too violent for reading. I made the last episode about 1952. No changes in it were required of me.

At about this same time, somebody in New York tried to talk me into joining a very small group of artists and writers who would be their own publishers. Among them was Mickey Spillane. I declined. I heard later that it didn't work out. Nevertheless, I unwisely joined another group for the same pur-

pose. For a year I batted out comic book pages. Five new titles of ours went on the stands for several months, including WEIRD TALES OF THE FUTURE. They simply added to the already glutted market. The comic book industry was starting to topple for too many publishers.

I regretted having to leave comics, but there was beginning to be a realization that there was something better and more worthwhile closer to home.

Do you still read science fiction?

No, but I should like to. It's necessary to keep both my brain cells headed in other directions.

Is there any particular comics format idea you've wanted to do, but never had the chance?

Around 1951 I kept thinking about trying a strip or comic book feature about little creatures on another planet. Something in a simpler style, somewhat like BC. For various reasons I didn't follow through. Later, I thought about books for youngsters, based on the imaginative stories about odd characters from other planets I had told my son about when he was a small boy. Then other things came up to do, but I never until the last few years quite abandoned the intention of starting.

You were a reader of MAD from the very beginning in late 1952. Off and on since then both the comic book under Harvey Kurtzman and the magazine under Al Feldstein have contained some really wild features by you. Do you expect to have any more work in MAD in the near future?

Having material published in MAD has always been like getting a shot in the liver, but getting around to doing the material has been difficult since an uncle came to live with us, who sleeps on my drawing board. About every fifty years the editors of MAD use something of mine. That's how long is required to save up enough of those leftover tiny lines to do a three-page feature. That makes Harvey Kurtzman, Jerry DeFuccio and Al Feldstein about one thousand years old.

The September 1970 issue of MAD published something of mine called "Sports Cars We'd Like to See." Any spare ink lines left over will be sent free to BETTER HOMES AND GARDENS magazine.

Which format did you feel most comfortable working with, comic book pages or newspaper dailies?

I felt more comfortable with comic book pages because of greater experience with them. I dislike repetition in drawing, and daily strips have to overlap somewhat. It requires a lot of time to tell a story by newspaper cartoons, but perhaps readers like the suspense. I prefer to do a story so that it can be read at one sitting. Or should a comic book reader ever relax enough to sit? According to Dr. Wertham, the reader should always be alert to arrest attempts at that because of his deliberately deleterious delinquency. I received some satisfaction from the combination of Wertham's letter and Richard Kyle's column in GRAPHIC STORY MAGAZINE #11. Being a Wertham admirer is the reason I sold my comic book collection a couple of years ago. I wanted to be undelinquent desperately, and there was no other way.

Do you wish now that you'd gotten a strip syndicated, and were still producing it, or are you happy that things turned out as they did?

Fifteen or twenty years ago I would have been quite discouraged if I could have foreseen matters turning out as they did regarding syndication. But now I realize I have a certain freedom I wouldn't have had if tied to a daily comic strip. What's more important to me, I feel that the kind of work I've been doing in recent years is of greater value to others.

In late 1958 you began the massive project of "paraphrasing" the Bible for Ambassador Press in Pasadena.

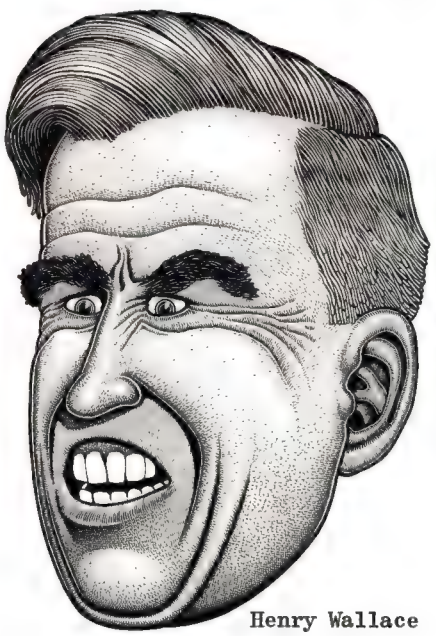
Paraphrasing isn't exactly what's being done. There is a definite story thread in the Bible, though to some readers it appears frayed and broken. I try to tie it solidly together, at the same time making events easier to understand, especially by youngsters. This is more difficult to do than humor. It requires research and study. It takes about two weeks to do the research and writing for each monthly installment.

It's never a matter of simply rewording what some other Bible story author has written. Often I am amazed at what so many other writers have omitted or strayed from. Of course a certain amount of imagination has to be employed to bridge the gaps and make for smooth continuity. The illustrations are not easy for me because of the struggle to prevent them from appearing too cartoony. This extra effort is well worthwhile, even if measured only by the letters of thanks that come in from many places around the world.

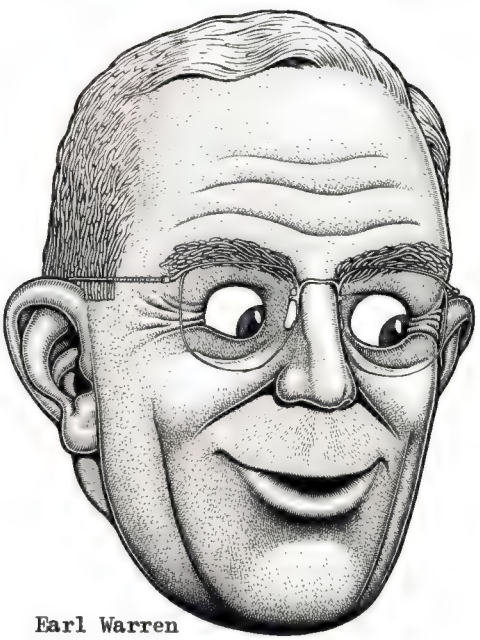
What do you feel to be your best work for Ambassador Press?

My illustrations for THE STORY OF MAN -- then called THE BIBLE STORY -- done about ten years ago. I could see better then because of

Albin Barkley



Henry Wallace



Earl Warren

the hot Ovaltine fumes that cleared my eyes. Now all they do for me is fog up my glasses. This means doing what I've been p u t t i n g off -- switching to cold Postum.

How much artistic license did you take with the conception of the scenes depicting atomic annihilation? Is the interpretation wholly your own?

The drawings having to do with the future were made to illustrate certain prophesies in the Book of Revelation. They're not based on my interpretations nor on those of anyone else, inasmuch as the Bible interprets itself to those who carefully look into it without prejudice. Naturally, my imagination was involved. My approach would be the same today if I were to do them over, though I would try to improve the layouts.

This issue's cover illustration has a figure that seems to be drawn in a "foetus position," even to the shape of the head. Was this intentional?

I never thought of it that way. Sig Freud would probably go raving mad over my stuff. Jerry De Fuccio of MAD once told me that some psychiatrist or editor or some character said to him my material wasn't really fit to publish because it was rife with sex suggestions and symbols. This both disgusted and amused me because I have always been -- particularly in the past -- on the naive side. That isn't the right word, of course, but it's basic. I've always had a lot of things to think about and plan for without scheming up fiendishly subtle figures and designs to trap the minds of others, especially youngsters. I don't mean that I resent your thinking that something I drew looked purposely like a foetus. I know I draw things that look like all kinds of organs and glands. It's like the monkey, which, if he pounded away at a typewriter for a million years, might accidentally type out the "Star Spangled Banner" lyrics.

The work you've done on the possible effects of atomic war is some of the most grotesque art ever produced. Yet there's a touch of humor in even your grisliest creations. Is your work always a blend of both?

Only sometimes. Occasionally I work simple humor into the text of THE STORY OF MAN. It's generally something to make the villains appear ridiculous. Humor in the illustrations is less frequent and less obvious -- like a battle scene in which some invader is about to catch a spearhead in some delicate area.

What do you think of the underground comic artists of today, some of whom have been influenced by your style? How do you account for your popularity among many underground cartoonists?

I'm flattered, naturally, but I can't account for it. I wasn't aware of any popularity. From what little I've only recently learned of the underground comics, one shouldn't form an opinion of what one hasn't seen, but if their material is right I don't see why they must be termed "underground." I doubt if it can be fairly compared to the comic book field of early days because freedom back then was within fairly reasonable bounds. Today's freedom, as in other forms of entertainment, extends toward a sickness many people don't recognize.

Is that your evaluation of today's comic art field in general, too?

I don't feel qualified to comment at length because of being so far on the outside. I wish that the comic art field could be more educational in an entertaining way. I mean, a few more features like MARK TRAIL, but on other subjects. But then the comic books, especially, possibly would lose their punch for many readers, even if only ten percent of the features were informative.

What do you think is the future of the comic art field?

Fairly healthy for a limited time as long as publishers stay off any trend toward questionable material. You can stop raising your eyebrows any time. I realize I sound like a square.

What do you feel is the best work you've ever done?

My best work technique-wise has been in caricatures. Best satire, in MAD. Best comic book humor, in Martin Goodman's publications. The best serious illustrations have been for Ambassador Press.

Of your comic book work, what are your favorites?

Spacehawk. Powerhouse Pepper. "Eye of Doom" for Goodman, among the science fiction and fantasy stuff. Right now specific titles escape me.

Least favorite?

SPACEHAWK, as I was told to write and draw it by the publisher when he decided that it was unpatriotic to run around space while World War Two was in progress.

What do you think you'll be best remembered for? What would you like to be best remembered for?

Some people will remember me longest for the disreputable pants I wear around home. Giving them up is difficult because of sentimental value. There are still a few hairs left in them from my old horse at San Juan Hill. I never bothered with a saddle or blanket.

Regarding comic books, I should like to be remembered for POWERHOUSE PEPPER. In the overall body of material published, I prefer to be best remembered for THE STORY OF MAN.

How many different magazines have you had work in over the years?

About sixty national magazines, plus several house organs.

Any regrets?

Plenty. I wish I had been more aware of comic book page rates during the early years. Two or three publishers took advantage of my living on the west coast. One editor suddenly became very generous when I showed up unexpectedly in New York. Retroactively so, in fact.

I wish I hadn't put that bottle of beer beside my bottle of drawing ink. For two months I ran around singing "Laughing on the Outside, Higgins on the Inside."

I regret not insuring the only cartoon package of mine ever lost in the mails. (I didn't insure the hundreds of others, either.) Later there was evidence that the package was received in New York. People got several pages of cartoons from me for nothing.

There were times when I wished that I could have been the Invisible Man, so that it would have been possible to sneak up and pliers-pinch all the editors and advertisers who had published or republished my material without permission or payment. But who wants to be responsible for sore winners or losers?

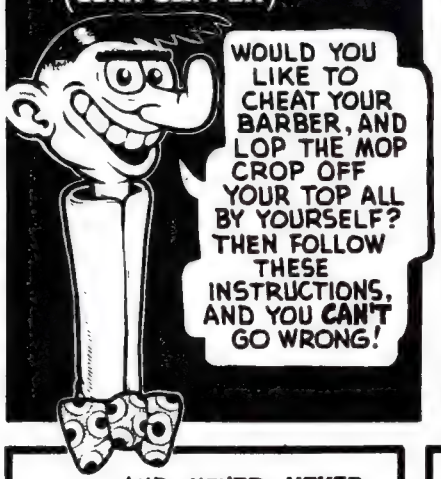
Interview conducted by Dick Voll:

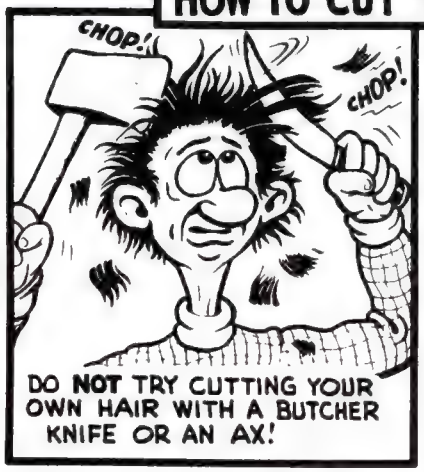
Additional questions submitted by Glenn Bray, Douglas Menville, Bill Spicer and Henry Steele.

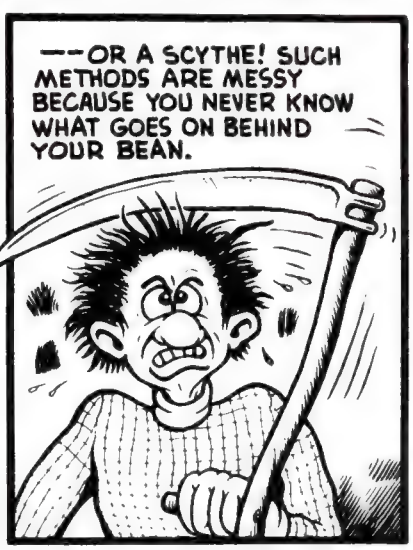
the CULTURE CORNER

CONDUCTED BY
CRAWLER Q. COLLAR, C.C.
(CONK CLIPPER)

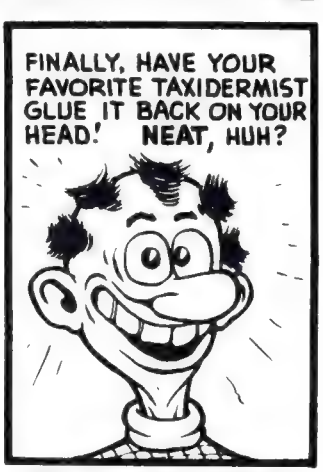
A PAGE OF PRICELESS INFORMATION ON
HOW TO CUT YOUR OWN HAIR


WOULD YOU LIKE TO CHEAT YOUR BARBER, AND LOP THE MOP CROP OFF YOUR TOP ALL BY YOURSELF? THEN FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS, AND YOU CAN'T GO WRONG!

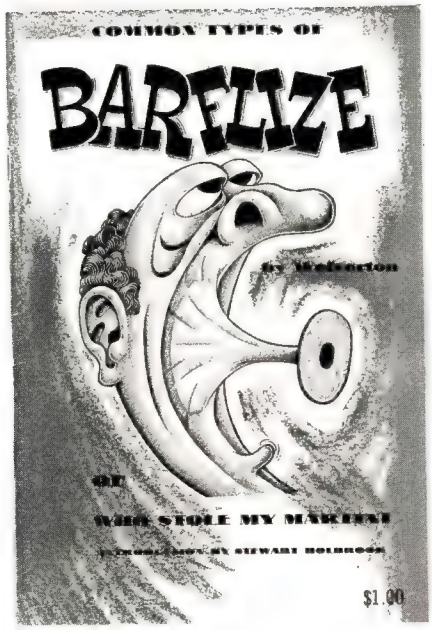




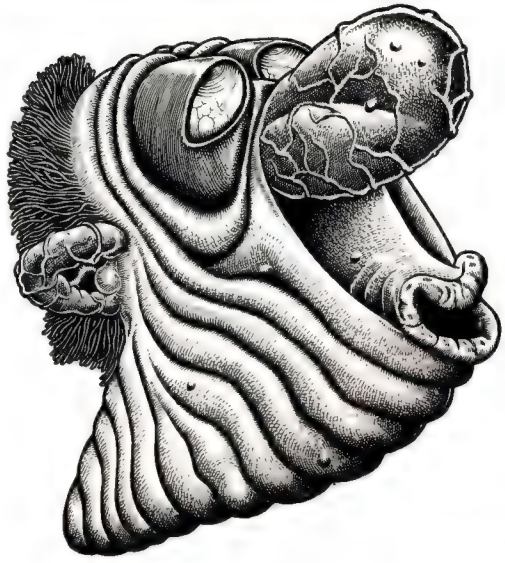
THUS YOU WILL BE IN A POSITION TO SEE ALL OF YOUR HAIR WITHOUT USING MIRRORS, AND YOU CAN EASILY CUT IT TO SUIT YOUR TASTE!
SNIP!
SNIP!
BASIL WOLVERTON

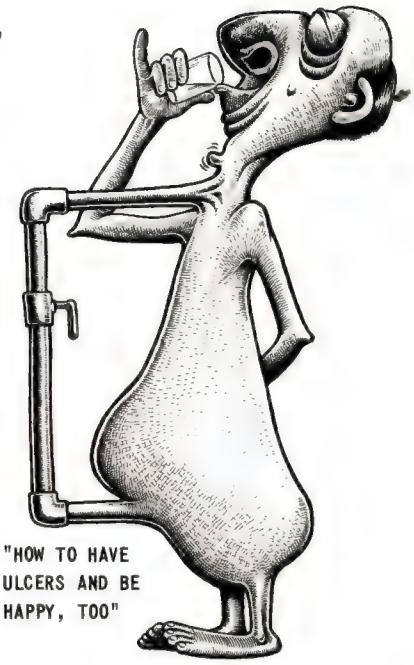


BE EDUCATED!!
DON'T MISS THE NEXT CULTURE CORNER!!



"I HOPE YOU DON'T THINK I'M MOOCHING YOUR WHISKEY"





"HOW TO HAVE ULCERS AND BE HAPPY, TOO"

INTRODUCTION

Before Basil Wolverton turned his talented hand and unbridled imagination to the subject of alcohol, the most distinguished artist in this line was the Rev. Doctor Thomas Sewall. That good man's name may not be familiar to you, yet you know his work. It appeared in seven luridly colored plates in school physiologies, and depicted the progressive hell through which the stomachs of dedicated topers went their dreadful way from a natural healthy gray to a sinister deep purple blotched with black. You will recall them, possibly with shudders. I fancy they had some effect in keeping Young America from the bottle, at least until age sixteen or thereabouts. After that, I'm not so sure.

The Rev. Doctor Sewall's technique was good for its day, which is long past. Now comes the Rev. Doctor Wolverton with a technique so advanced that Sewall's work pales in comparison. The exhibits in this book run the whole gamut of topers, or drinkers. Modest Mr. Wolverton calls them *common* types of Barflize. In reality they range, if I may coin a neat phrase, the full length of the bar—and under the bar, where so many of these characters are often found and where every last one of them belongs.

Nothing like Wolverton drinkers has been seen in art circles since the great Hogarth, whose woodcuts of Gin Lane have long been classics. Here in the world of Wolverton is revealed the magic by which genteel or mousey men and women are changed, through the medium of a few drinks (well, then, many drinks) into hideous personalities one is not likely soon to forget. If ever.

I know them intimately, but never before saw them with quite the blinding clarity that is one of Mr. Wolverton's many gifts. I prophesy great things for this little book. It will either bring a return of Prohibition, or a radical improvement of our drinking habits. Without knowing it, Mr. Wolverton may be, of all things, a Reformer. Consider his examples. ("Who said I can't hold my beer?") The contemplation of his graphic horrors may serve to remove the fearsome black and purple from uncounted stomachs, which will then return to their happy and natural healthy condition. I can hope, anyway.

STEWART HOLBROOK

Portland, Oregon

"I TOLD MY WIFE I'D GET A SNOOTFUL"

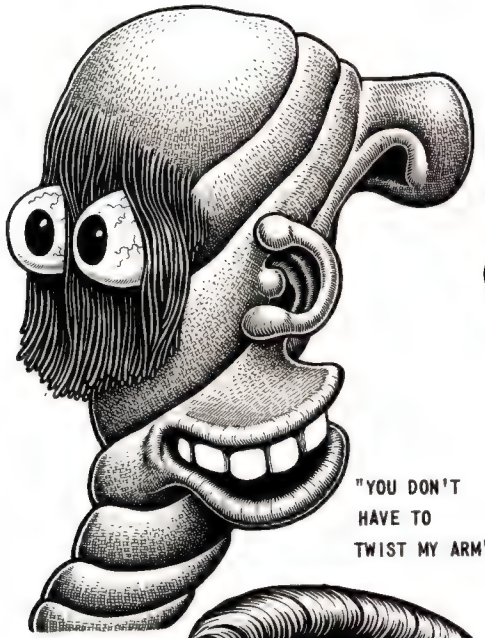
"OH, *YOU'RE* NOT TOO OLD"

"MIX ME ANOTHER EYE OPENER"

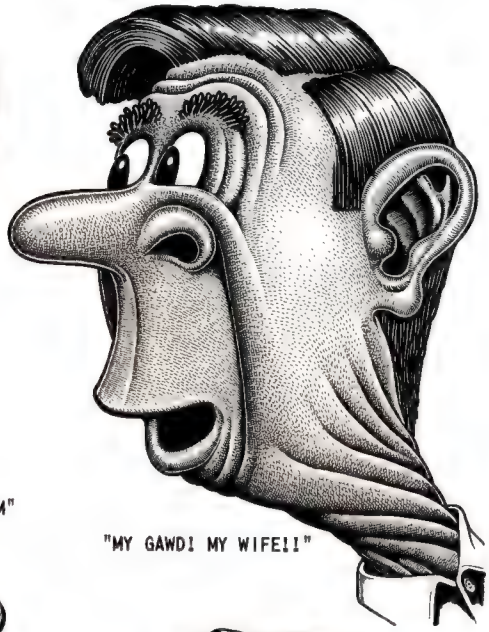
"LOOKIT!!! THERE'S MILLIONS OF THEM!"

"I'M REALLY SCREWED UP"

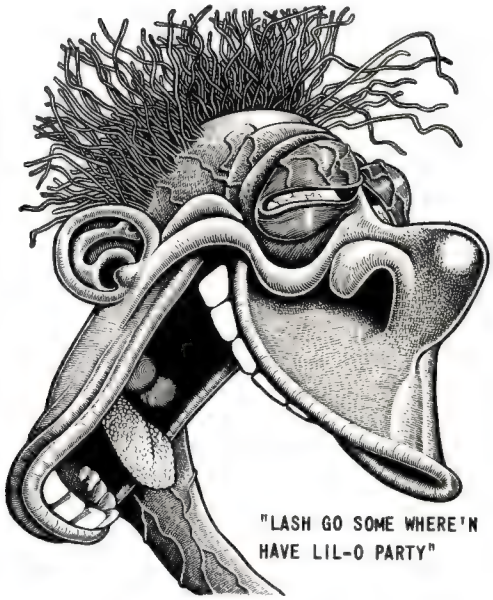
"THERE IT COMES AGAIN"



"YOU DON'T HAVE TO TWIST MY ARM"



"MY GAWD! MY WIFE!!"

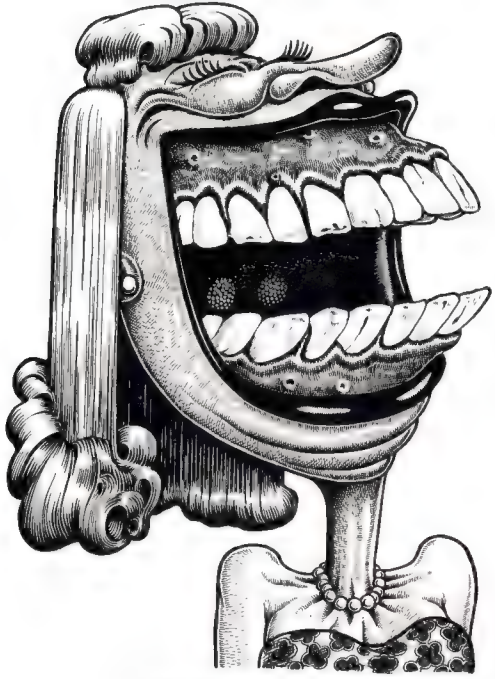


"LASH GO SOME WHERE'N HAVE LIL-O PARTY"

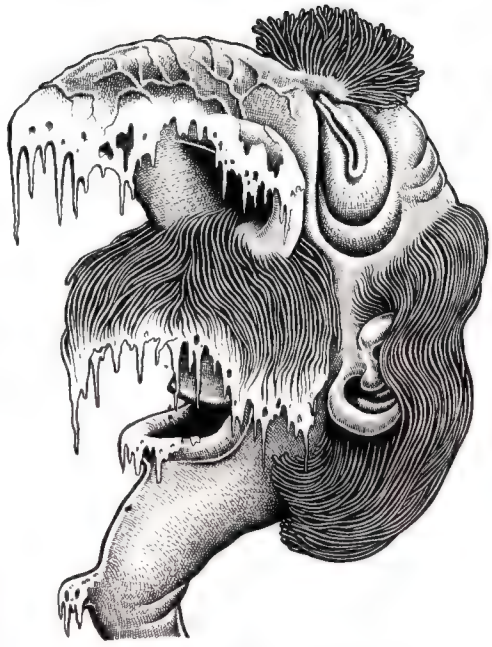
"ONE MORE WON'T HURT YOU"

"DAT MULE NEVER SAW MOSCOW"

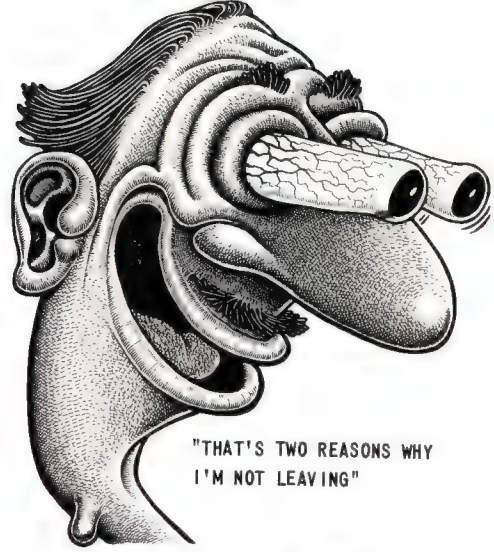
"LOOK, NO HANDS"



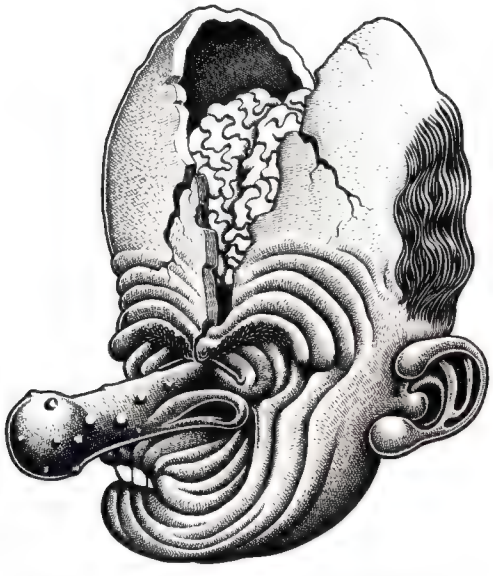
"YOU WOULD ORDER AN ANGEL'S KISS"



"BOY, DID SHE GIVE ME THE FREEZE"

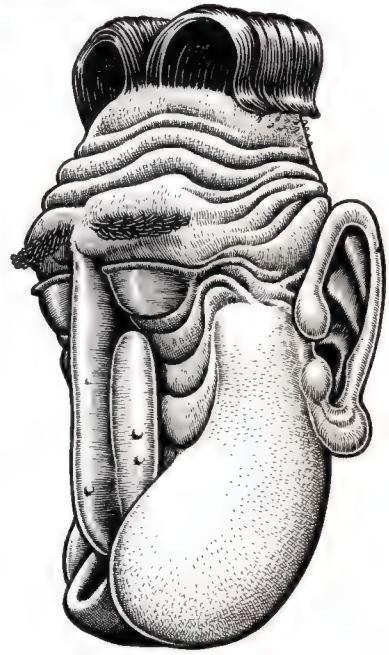


"THAT'S TWO REASONS WHY I'M NOT LEAVING"

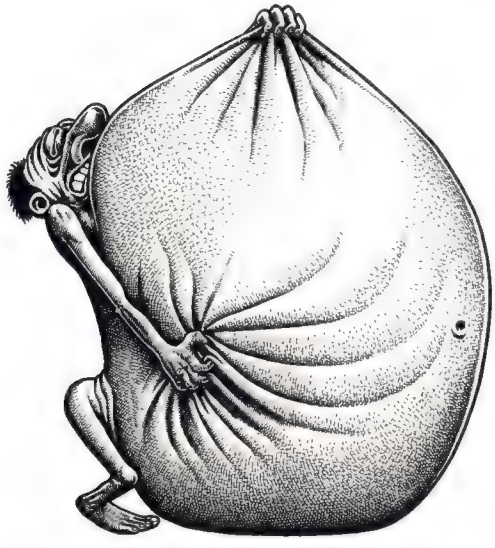


"HONEST, BOSS, I ONLY HAD TWO LAST NIGHT"

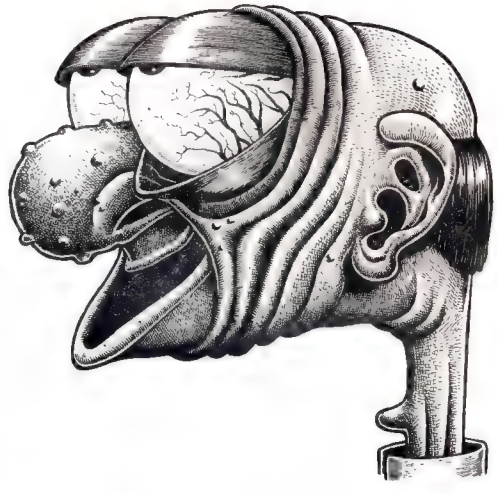
"BARTENDER!! WATER!!"



"I DRINK FOR THE BOUQUET"



"WHAT DO YOU MEAN, I CAN'T HOLD MY BEER"



"OFFICER, I HAVEN'T HAD A DRINK IN WEEKS"

"NO THANKS... I'M STRETCHING MINE OUT"

"I'M A PIG FOR BRANDY"

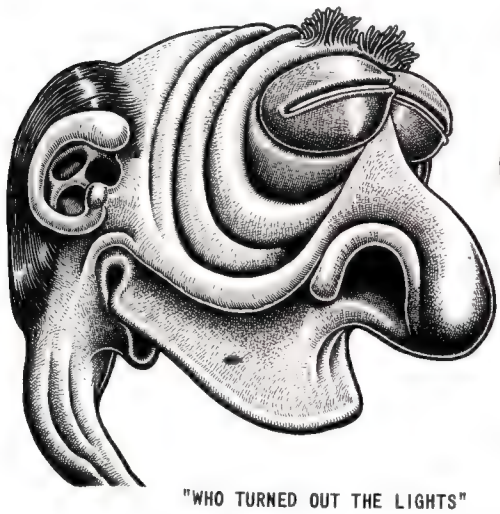
"I SAID DRY...NOT ARID"

"SHE SAID SHE WAS OF AGE"

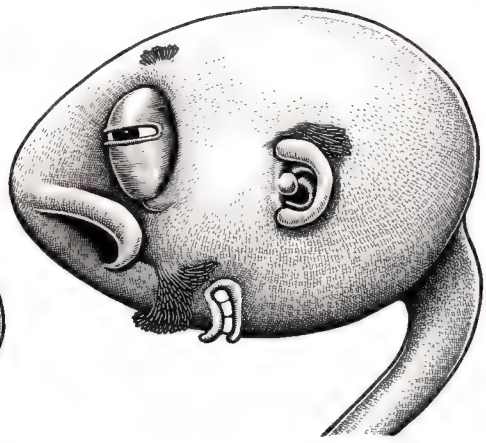
"BOY, WHAT A SALES MEETING"

"I THOUGHT I TOLD YOU NO SODA"

"I'M SLINGING SAM FROM SINGAPORE"



"WHO TURNED OUT THE LIGHTS"



"IT'S BEEN JUST ONE EGG NOG PARTY AFTER ANOTHER"

"NO MORE FOR ME, BOY, I'M DRIVING"

?
LADIES — SHOP FOR THAT MOP AT SPLOP'S MOP SHOP! SPLOP'S MOPS AREN'T FLOPS! SPLOP'S MOPS ARE TOPS! SO HOP TO A SPLOP MOP SHOP AND COP A SPLOP MOP!
BLUB!
BBB
BASIL WOLVERTON

Broadcast Number One July 5th, 1951

THEME: "SHINE"

FADE OUT FOR:

ANNOUNCER (Give commercial #1).

THEME UP FOR FEW SECONDS, THEN FADE OUT FOR:

BASIL: This is the KVAN Caricature Club, and this is your o-o-o-o-old friend, Basil Wolverton, crouched over the drawing board, and all set to dash off a free portrait of some lucky--lucky? Heh!--letter writer. It's a bit crowded here in the cartoon studio, what with Bing Crosby, James Scott, Fats Waller, the Benny Goodman Sextet, the John Scott Trotter Eight, Freddie Slack and his Orchestra, Bob Crosby's Bobcats and one old Nickelodeon all crammed into one room. Then there's Dr. Dribble the dope--uh--I mean the gentleman who'll tell what today's portrait looks like simply by squinting at the winner's--handwriting. I'll take it from there --but first--an important message for the ladies:

Does your husband snore? Do the vibrations from his quivering adenoids cause cracks in the bedroom plaster? You can break your husband of snoring simply by using a Bumbinger Bazoo Button. All you do is tack the Bumbinger Bazoo Button on his upper lip while he's snoring. Then twist one of his ears around and button it to his lip. He'll leap out of bed when he hears what's going on! Or, if you prefer, sew a Bumbinger Bazoo Button on your husband's ear, and twist his KISSER around to button to it. His own snoring will keep him awake! Buy a bunch of Bumbinger Bazoo Buttons today -- and enjoy a quiet night's rest. A package of Bumbinger's Bazoo Buttons also makes delicious soup when dissolved in hot (ugh) Hadacol.

Now for music. Here's something recorded from an old player piano roll as played by James Scott. Title: QUALITY RAG. I'd like to dedicate this to the pants I'm wearing. Not much quality, but mostly rag...

QUALITY RAG

BASIL: While your eardrums are still adjusted to listening to player piano music, here's another made by Fats Waller years ago. One of the record companies recorded the roll by playing it thru a pianola. That is not a brand of shoe polish. It's a rig that plays the roll. Wooden fingers extend out from it to play on a piano keyboard. In this instance, either the pianola wasn't placed up to the piano just right, or the roll wasn't tracking correctly, and the record was spoiled from start to finish. Regardless of that, it was released. Here it is--Fats Waller playing THE MESS AROUND. Mess is right...

MESS AROUND (to be faded out about one third or a half thru).

BASIL: See what I mean? It's a mystery to me how that record was released in that condition--but then a lot of us are at large who shouldn't ever have been released. Will the fellow in the engineers booth kindly quit nodding at me?

Now let's do a little better with Bing Crosby and brother Bob's Bobcats doing WALKING THE FLOOR OVER YOU. Would anyone listening care to get down on the floor for Crosby to walk over? Hmmmm?

WALKING THE FLOOR OVER YOU

BASIL: He said he couldn't sleep a wink. How could he sleep when

he kept walking around? Or was he a somnambulist?

Friends -- do you have trouble getting out of bed in the morning? Do you droop when you should be full of soup? Then Hank's Hardware House has the answer to your problem! For only a few hundred dollars, depending upon the condition of your spine, Hank will equip you with a rocket propulsion device, complete with detonator, rocket barrel and rocket fool--uh--I mean fuel. Riveted securely to your back, the device can be set to any desired time. For example, if you wish to arise at 7 a.m.--and who does?--just set the timer, and at 7 a.m. you will be BLASTED out from under the sheets. As a special inducement to buy...Hank's Hardware House...for this week only... will give you...free...a handy rudder to attach to your...person. Then, when you are blasted out of bed, you can steer yourself directly to work, thus eliminating all risk of being late.

Hmmm.

BASHFUL BABY BLUES. Freddie Slack and his Orchestra. After Slack I'll be back to tell you who today's portrait winner is!

BASHFUL BABY BLUES

BASIL: That baby didn't sound very bashful.

Would you like a portrait of yourself--the kind of picture you can proudly show to your friends without making excuses like "My wife kicked me in the stomach just before this was taken," or "I don't look so good here because something was biting me." Well, you can have a FREE portrait. All you do is write a card or letter to me here at KVAN. You don't have to say anything special. Bawl me out if you feel like it, or, if you want to be untruthful and say how much you like the show--that's fine. The main thing is to write in your own handwriting. Each broadcast my assistant, Dr. Daniel D. Dribble, eminent handwriting analyst -- and liver pill salesman -- will pick one letter. He will then analyze the handwriting to determine the character of the individual. Dr. Dribble is a very shrewd character himself, and possesses the amazing faculty of determining what a person looks like simply by gazing at the person's...handwriting. In turn, I shall draw what Dr. Dribble perceives...if anything. Of course, it's possible that the picture won't EXACTLY resemble the writer. But at least it's what Dr. Dribble thinks the writer SHOULD look like. Write that letter or card today to possibly learn what YOU should look like!

Right now Dr. Dribble is reaching into the mailbag...

SOUND: SHRIEK

BASIL: Woops! There was a mouse in the mailbag! Anyway, Dr. Dribble is now opening a letter with the mitt that DIDN'T get bitten. Thank you, Doctor. The winner today is...Mrs. George Wells, 2809 U Street, Vancouver. Now, here is my friend and colleague, Dr. Daniel D. Dribble, who will give a lightning analysis...well...who wants an analysis of lightning?...oh, well... he'll give a quick analysis of Mrs. Wells' handwriting, plus his candid opinion of what she SHOULD look like. Dr. Dribble...

DR. DRIBBLE: Mrs. Wells makes high Ls, which shows she must have a long neck. Her writing slants uphill, and that indicates her head must come to a peak--like mine. She makes big Is, which shows she has big eyes. She uses a cheap pen, which means she must scratch for a living, and is therefore very thin. Congratulations, Mrs. Wells! Now back to you, pal!

BASIL: Thank you, Dr. Dribble. Right after the show I'll create our version of Mrs. Wells, and mail it to her. I'm sure she'll be very happy -- until she receives it.

Here's Bing back with the John Scott Trotter Eight to sing GOODBYE, LITTLE DARLIN, GOODBYE.

GOODBYE, LITTLE DARLIN, GOODBYE

BASIL: As I said before, it's pretty crowded here in the cartoon studio with all the people we named at the beginning of the show. Except for Benny Goodman and his boys, who play our theme, there's no point in the rest of you hanging around any longer...

SOUND: GOOD! (BIG NOISE, endingx with slamming of door)

BASIL: Hmmm. They left in a hurry. Well, Benny and his boys are still here, so how about doing RACHAEL'S DREAM, Ben?

RACHAEL'S DREAM

BASIL: How could Rachael dream with all that going on? Incidentally, if anyone listening knows if Rachael snores, we'd be happy to mail her a Bumbinger Bazoo Button...fer nuttin'.

Len Garrett, the engineer, is nervously fluttering his moustache and eyebrows and ears and adam's apple. That means our time is about up. Don't forget those cards or letters. YOU may be the next vict...uh, I mean the next person to win a free portrait. Until this same time next week, this is Dr. Dribble and Basil Wolverton leaving you with this profound suggestion. Dr. Dribble will quote...

DR. DRIBBLE:
If your left is dull and drab
and dreary,
And each moment seems so hard to bear...
Get a thrill, my blase friend,
and excitement without end,
Simply by sprinkling earwigs in your hair.

BASIL: Goodbye, everybody.

THEME: (SHINE)

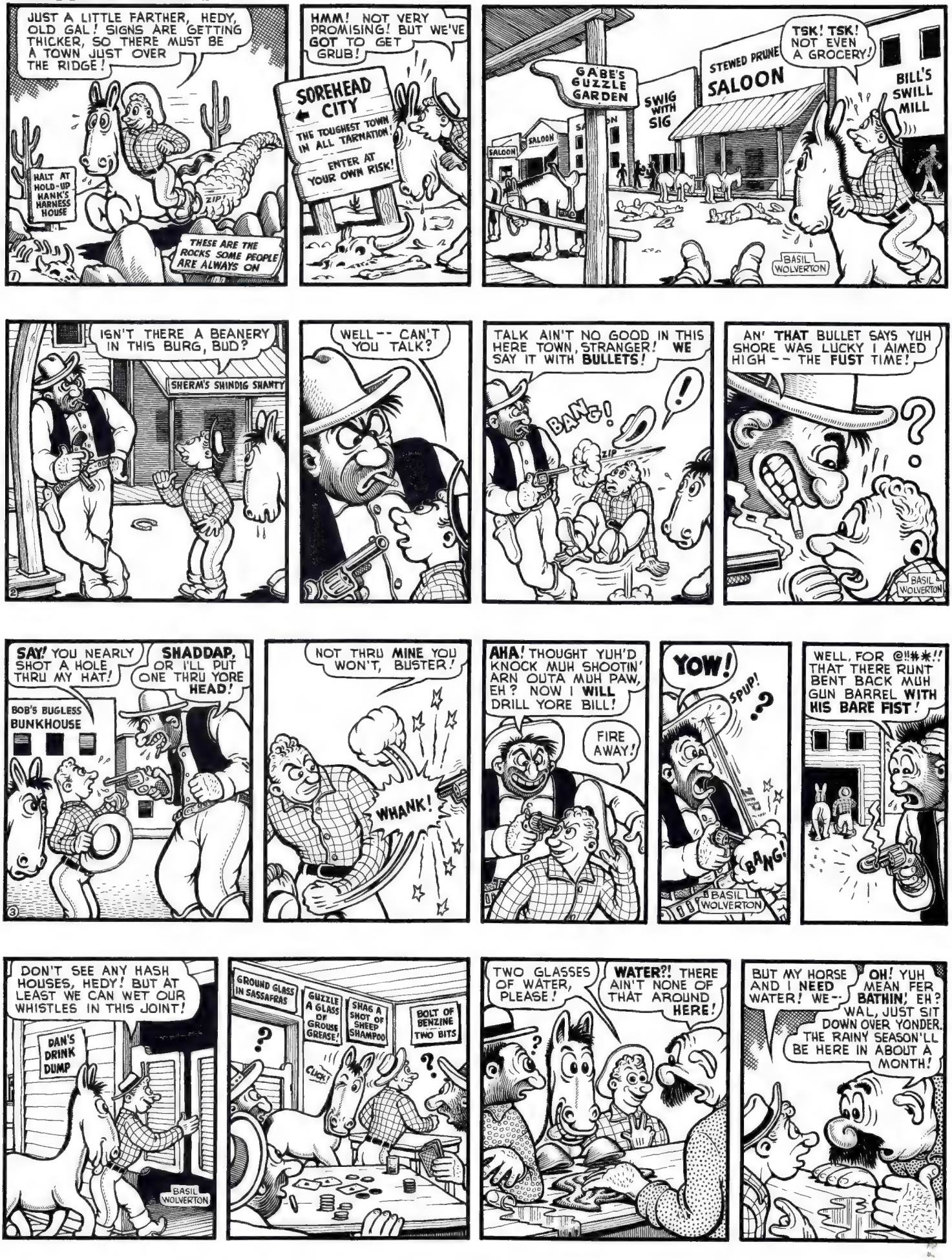
THEME FADE OUT FOR:

ANNOUNCER: Is there anyone listening who is unhappy because of being too handsome? Then why not let caricaturist Basil Wolverton fix your face -- on paper, of course. You'll be pleased and delighted to own a detailed cartoon portrait of yourself done by this artist. Write to this station for details, or call 5-8228 in Vancouver. That number again...5-8228 in Vancouver.

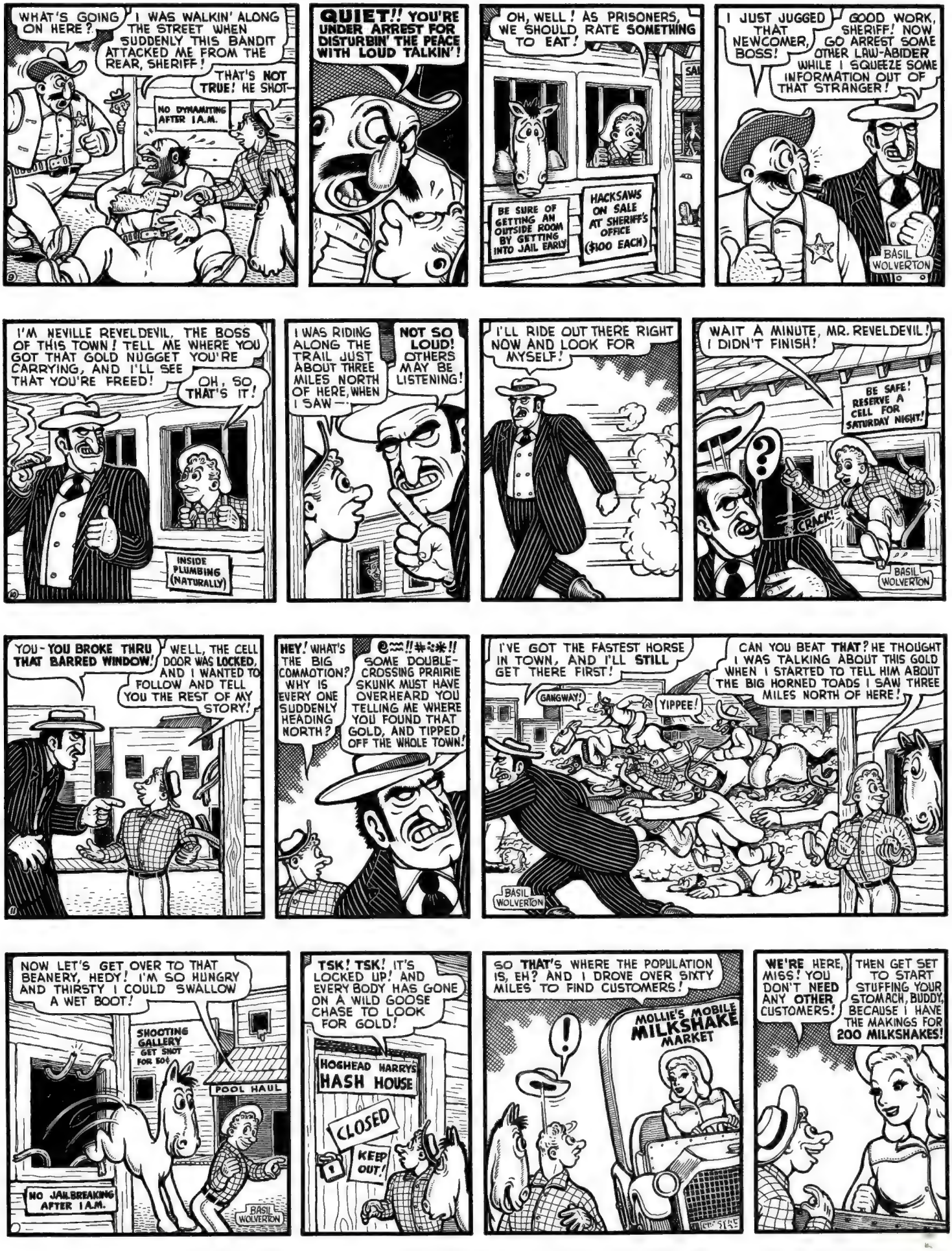
THEME UP, then fade out for end of show.

ANNOUNCER: Would you like to see yourself as others may see you--even though it hurts? Basil Wolverton, whom LIFE magazine has dubbed the "Spaghetti and Meatball" artist, welcomes the opportunity to draw your caricature in his detailed style. For the cost and other details, write this station, KVAN, or call 5-8228 in Vancouver.

HERCULES HARDY


JUST A LITTLE FARTHER, HEDY, OLD GAL! SIGNS ARE GETTING THICKER, SO THERE MUST BE A TOWN JUST OVER THE RIDGE!
HALT AT HOLD-UP HANK'S HARNESS HOUSE
ZIP
THESE ARE THE ROCKS SOME PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS ON
1
HMM! NOT VERY PROMISING! BUT WE'VE GOT TO GET GRUB!
SOREHEAD CITY
THE TOUGHEST TOWN IN ALL TARNATION!
ENTER AT YOUR OWN RISK!
GABE'S GUZZLE GARDEN
SWIG WITH SIG
STEWED PRUNE SALOON
TSK! TSK! NOT EVEN A GROCERY!
BILL'S SWILL MILL
SALOON
SALOON
BASIL WOLVERTON
ISN'T THERE A BEANERY IN THIS BURG, BUD?
SHERM'S SHINDIG SHANTY
2
WELL -- CAN'T YOU TALK?
TALK AIN'T NO GOOD IN THIS HERE TOWN, STRANGER! WE SAY IT WITH BULLETS!
BANG!
ZIP
AN' THAT BULLET SAYS YUH SHORE WAS LUCKY I AIMED HIGH -- THE FUST TIME!
BASIL WOLVERTON
SAY! YOU NEARLY SHOT A HOLE THRU MY HAT!
SHADDAP, OR I'LL PUT ONE THRU YORE HEAD!
BOB'S BUGLESS BUNKHOUSE
3
NOT THRU MINE YOU WON'T, BUSTER!
WHANK!
AHA! THOUGHT YUH'D KNOCK MUH SHOOTIN' ARN OUTA MUH PAW, EH? NOW I WILL DRILL YORE BILL!
FIRE AWAY!
YOW!
SPUP!
ZIP
BANG!
BASIL WOLVERTON
WELL, FOR @!#*!! THAT THERE RUNT BENT BACK MUH GUN BARREL WITH HIS BARE FIST!
DON'T SEE ANY HASH HOUSES, HEDY! BUT AT LEAST WE CAN WET OUR WHISTLES IN THIS JOINT!
DAN'S DRINK DUMP
BASIL WOLVERTON
GROUND GLASS IN SASSAFRAS
GUZZLE A GLASS OF GROUSE GREASE!
SHAG A SHOT OF SHEEP SHAMPOO
BOLT OF BENZINE TWO BITS
CLICK
TWO GLASSES OF WATER, PLEASE!
WATER?! THERE AIN'T NONE OF THAT AROUND HERE!
BUT MY HORSE AND I NEED WATER! WE--
OH! YUH MEAN FER BATHIN', EH? WAL, JUST SIT DOWN OVER YONDER. THE RAINY SEASON'LL BE HERE IN ABOUT A MONTH!

NO WATER, EH? OR IS IT THAT IT COSTS SO MUCH YOU THINK I CAN'T PAY FOR IT?
SUFFERIN' SADDLE SOAP! WHAT A WHOPPER OF A GOLD NUGGET!
PLEASE, DON'T SWALLOW GLASSES!
LEMME LOOK AT THAT!
ZIP!
DDT
RAT POISON
HMM! IT IS GOLD! THIS IS WORTH KEEPING!
SWISH!
OW!
IT SURE IS! THAT'S WHY I'M KEEPING IT!
BASIL WOLVERTON
COME ON, HEDY! LET'S TRACK FROM THIS SHACK AND LOOK ELSEWHERE FOR REFRESHMENTS!
DAN'S DRINK DUMP
STUPID! WHY DID YOU LET THAT HORSE BITE YOU? NOW GO GET THAT FELLOW! I WANT TO KNOW WHERE HE GOT THAT GOLD!
SURE, BOSS!
I'LL CIRCLE AROUND THESE BUILDIN'S, AND TAKE THE RUNT BY SURPRISE!
SMELLY SMITH, SMUGGLER
THE BOSS DIDN'T SAY IF HE WANTED HIM DEAD OR ALIVE;- BUT HE AIN'T GONNA GET HIM ALIVE!
DON'S DIN DEN
BASIL WOLVERTON
WHAT A TOWN! NOT A SIGN OF FOOD OR WATER!
SALOON
GUZZLE
SALOON
HOT HORSE HARNESS! THAT'S FOR US, HEDY!
HOGHEAD HARRY'S HASH HOUSE
GOOD GREASY GRUB
YIPE!
CHEAT STREET
SCARRED CARD BOULEVARD
HEH! HEH!
BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG! BANG!
ZIP!
ZIP!
BASIL WOLVERTON
WHAT'S THE IDEA OF SHOOTING AT ME?
WOT'S THE IDEA OF JUMPIN' AROUND? YUH SPOILT MY AIM!
JOE'S JIPP JOINT
NOW I'LL TAKE YUH APART WITH MY FISTS!
ZIP!
BASIL WOLVERTON
SWISH!
OW!
WHUMP!
NO, HEDY! NEVER BITE A MAN WHEN HE'S DOWN!


WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
I WAS WALKIN' ALONG THE STREET WHEN SUDDENLY THIS BANDIT ATTACKED ME FROM THE REAR, SHERIFF!
THAT'S NOT TRUE! HE SHOT—
NO DYNAMITING AFTER 1A.M.
QUIET!! YOU'RE UNDER ARREST FOR DISTURBIN' THE PEACE WITH LOUD TALKIN'!
OH, WELL! AS PRISONERS, WE SHOULD RATE SOMETHING TO EAT!
BE SURE OF GETTING AN OUTSIDE ROOM BY GETTING INTO JAIL EARLY
HACKSAWS ON SALE AT SHERIFF'S OFFICE ($100 EACH)
I JUST JUGGED THAT NEWCOMER, BOSS!
GOOD WORK, SHERIFF! NOW GO ARREST SOME OTHER LAW-ABIDER WHILE I SQUEEZE SOME INFORMATION OUT OF THAT STRANGER!
BASIL WOLVERTON
I'M NEVILLE REVELDEVIL, THE BOSS OF THIS TOWN! TELL ME WHERE YOU GOT THAT GOLD NUGGET YOU'RE CARRYING, AND I'LL SEE THAT YOU'RE FREED!
OH, SO THAT'S IT!
INSIDE PLUMBING (NATURALLY)
I WAS RIDING ALONG THE TRAIL JUST ABOUT THREE MILES NORTH OF HERE, WHEN I SAW—
NOT SO LOUD! OTHERS MAY BE LISTENING!
I'LL RIDE OUT THERE RIGHT NOW AND LOOK FOR MYSELF!
WAIT A MINUTE, MR. REVELDEVIL! I DIDN'T FINISH!
BE SAFE! RESERVE A CELL FOR SATURDAY NIGHT!
?
CRACK!
BASIL WOLVERTON
YOU—YOU BROKE THRU THAT BARRED WINDOW!
WELL, THE CELL DOOR WAS LOCKED, AND I WANTED TO FOLLOW AND TELL YOU THE REST OF MY STORY!
HEY! WHAT'S THE BIG COMMOTION? WHY IS EVERY ONE SUDDENLY HEADING NORTH?
@〰!!*:*!! SOME DOUBLE-CROSSING PRAIRIE SKUNK MUST HAVE OVERHEARD YOU TELLING ME WHERE YOU FOUND THAT GOLD, AND TIPPED OFF THE WHOLE TOWN!
I'VE GOT THE FASTEST HORSE IN TOWN, AND I'LL STILL GET THERE FIRST!
GANGWAY!
YIPPEE!
CAN YOU BEAT THAT? HE THOUGHT I WAS TALKING ABOUT THIS GOLD WHEN I STARTED TO TELL HIM ABOUT THE BIG HORNED TOADS I SAW THREE MILES NORTH OF HERE!
BASIL WOLVERTON
NOW LET'S GET OVER TO THAT BEANERY, HEDY! I'M SO HUNGRY AND THIRSTY I COULD SWALLOW A WET BOOT!
SHOOTING GALLERY GET SHOT FOR 50¢
POOL HAUL
NO JAILBREAKING AFTER 1A.M.
BASIL WOLVERTON
TSK! TSK! IT'S LOCKED UP! AND EVERY BODY HAS GONE ON A WILD GOOSE CHASE TO LOOK FOR GOLD!
HOGHEAD HARRYS HASH HOUSE
CLOSED
KEEP OUT!
SO THAT'S WHERE THE POPULATION IS, EH? AND I DROVE OVER SIXTY MILES TO FIND CUSTOMERS!
!
MOLLIE'S MOBILE MILKSHAKE MARKET
WE'RE HERE, MISS! YOU DON'T NEED ANY OTHER CUSTOMERS!
THEN GET SET TO START STUFFING YOUR STOMACH, BUDDY, BECAUSE I HAVE THE MAKINGS FOR 200 MILKSHAKES!

COMIC BOOK FEATURES BY BASIL WOLVERTON, 1938 TO 1954, AND MAD 1954 TO 1970

Compiled by Henry Steele and Dick Voll

DISK-EYES THE DETECTIVE and SPACEHAWKS
Circus 1 (June 1938) 2 3 (Aug 1938) Globe Syndicate

SPACE PATROL
Amazing Mystery Funnies Vol 2 #12 (Dec 1939) 18 19 21-24 (Sep 1940) Centaur

SPACEHAWK
Target 5 (June 1940) thru 34 (Dec 1942)
Novelty Press

ROCKMAN USA (Underground Secret Agent)
USA 1 (Aug 1941) 2 (Nov 1941) Marvel

THE STRANGE ADVENTURES OF METEOR MARTIN
Amazing Man 25 (Nov 1941) 26 (Jan 1942) Centaur

POWERHOUSE PEPPER
Joker 1 (apr 1942) thru 27 29-31 (Spring 1948)
Powerhouse Pepper 1 (1943) thru 5 (Nov 1948)
Gay 1 (July 1944) 18-22 28 29 (Fall 1947)
Tessie the Typist 2 (Winter 1944) 4 7-13 (Dec 1947)
Rusty 14 (Aug 1947)
Millie the Model 9 (Dec 1947) Marvel

SCOOP SCUTTLE
Silver Streak 20 (April 1942) 21 (May 1942)
Daredevil 12 (Aug 1942) thru 20 22 (April 1944)
Capt Battle Jr 2 (Winter 1943)
Candy 1 (Fall 1944) 2 3 (Spring 1945)
Horsefeathers 1 (Nov 1945) Comic House

SPLASH MORGAN
Comedy 9 (Apr 1942) Marvel

PECULIAR PEOPLE (Private Peeps at Preposterous Punks who Prowl this Planet)
The Human Torch 8 (Summer 1942) Marvel

FUNNY BONERS
The Human Torch 10 (Winter 1942)
Joker 18 (Spring 1945) Mar

FLAP FLIPFLOP THE FLYING FLASH
Kid 1 (Feb 1943)
Gay 23 (Apr 1946) 25 26 (Winter 1946)
Krazy 2 (Nov 1948) Mar

DISK-EYES THE DETECTIVE
USA 7 (March 1943)
Powerhouse Pepper 2 (Spring 1948) Marvel

DR. DIMWIT
Sub-Mariner 9 (Spring 1943)
Powerhouse Pepper 1 (1943) Marvel

TARGETOONS
Target 42 (Sep-Oct 1943)
Novelty Press

FOOLISH FACES (Photos of a Few Famous Fatheads and Freaks)
Powerhouse Pepper 1 (1943) Marvel

DOC ROCKBLOCK
Tessie the Typist 1 (May 1944) 2 (Winter 1944) Mar

PROF. PLOOP'S PARADE OF PECULIAR PEOPLE
Tessie the Typist 1 (May 1944) Marvel

INSPECTOR HECTOR THE CRIME DETECTOR PRESENTS A CARTOON CRIME
Gay 1 (July 1944)
Tessie the Typist 5 (Winter 1945)
Joker 17 (Aug 1944) Mar

PICTURE POEMS ABOUT PECULIAR PEOPLE
Joker 17 (Aug 1944)
Hedy 23 (Oct 1947) Marvel

LEANBEAN GREEN
Joker 17 (Aug 1944) Marvel

THE CULTURE CORNER
Whiz 65 (May 1945) thru 68 70-85 87-96 98-100 102-110 112-121 123 126 128-130 133 134 142 143 146 (June 1952) Fawcett

MYSTIC MOOT AND HIS MAGIC SNOOT
Ibis the Invincible 3 (Winter 1945) thru 6 (Spring 1948)
Comic 2 (May 1946) thru 10 (Feb 1947) Marvel

HASH HOUSE HANK
Gay 23 (April 1946) Marvel

SALESMAN SID THE HIGH PRESSURE KID
Gay 23 (April 1946)
Joker 22 (April 1946)
Oscar 25 (Sep 1947) Marvel

BEDTIME BUNK
Gay 24 (Sep 1946) Marvel
Tessie the Typist 6 (Sep 1946) Marvel

HOTHEAD HOTEL (Featuring Clerk Berserk McJerk)
Gay 24 (Sep 1946) Marvel

DAUNTLESS DAWSON
Comedy 34 (Fall 1946) Mar

PROF. JOGG'S TRAVELOGS
Gay 27 (Spring 1947) Mar

LENA PORTRAIT
Li'l Abner 61 (Dec 1947) Harvey

DR. WHACKYHACK THE WACKY QUACK
Nellie the Nurse 9 (Sep 1947)
Georgie 14 (Jan 1948)
Tessie the Typist 14 (Feb 1948) Marvel

GOOFY GIGGLES
Powerhouse Pepper 2 (Spring 1948) Marvel

PISTON PETE THE HOTEL CLERK
Krazy 1 (Aug 1948) Marvel

POWERHOUSE PEPPER'S PARADE OF PECULIAR PEOPLE
Powerhouse Pepper 5 (Nov 1948) Marvel

BINGBANG BUSTER AND HIS HORSE HEDY
Black Diamond Western 16 (Dec 1949) 18 thru 28 (Nov 1951) Comic House

THE END OF THE WORLD
Marvel Tales 102 (Aug 1951) Marvel

THE DEVIL BIRDS
Mystic 4 (Sep 1951) Marvel

PLANET OF TERROR
Journey into Unknown Worlds 7 (Oct 1951) Marvel

GATEWAY TO HORROR
Marvel Tales 104 (Dec 1951) Marvel

WHERE MONSTERS DWELL
Adventures into Terror 7 (Dec 1951) Marvel

THE EYE OF DOOM
Mystic 6 (Jan 1952) Marvel

ESCAPE TO DEATH and FLIGHT TO THE FUTURE
Weird Tales of the Future 2 (June 1952) S.P.M.

JUMPIN' JUPITER
Weird Tales of the Future 2 (June 1952) thru 5 (Jan 1953) S.P.M.

THE BRAIN BATS OF VENUS
Mr. Mystery 7 (Sep 1952) Aragon

THE MONSTER ON MARS and NIGHTMARE WORLD
Weird Tales of the Future 3 (Sep 1952) S.P.M.

ONE OF OUR GRAVEYARDS IS MISSING
Journey into Unknown Worlds 14 (Dec 1952) Mar

ROBOT WOMAN
Weird Mysteries 2 (Dec 1952) Gillmor

THE MAN FROM THE MOON
Weird Tales of the Future 5 (Feb 1953) S.P.M.

THEY CRAWL BY NIGHT
Journey into Unknown Worlds 15 (Feb 1953) Mar

THE MAN WHO NEVER SMILED
Weird Mysteries 4 (April 1953) Gillmor

SWAMP MONSTER
Weird Mysteries 5 (June 1953) Gillmor

Mad 10 (April 1954) One drawing, the last panel of FACE UPON THE FLOOR (Jack Davis). The same drawing was used in Panic 2 (Apr-May 1954) THE LADY OR THE TIGER (Will Elder) and Panic 3 (June-July 1954) LI'L MELVIN (Will Elder) E.C.

COVER
Mad 11 (May 1954) E.C.

Panic 4 (Aug-Sep 1954) COVER, reprinting cover art of Mad 11

MEET MISS POTGOLD
Mad 17 (Nov 1954) E.C.

DINING ETIQUETTE QUIZ
Mad 29 (Oct 1956) E.C.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING AROUND THE SOLAR SYSTEM
Mad 31 (Feb 1957) E.C.

MAD HATS
Mad 36 (Dec 1957) E.C.

INSIDE STORY
Mad 40 (July 1958) E.C.

WHEELERS AND DEALERS
Mad 82 (Oct 1963) E.C.

SPORTS CARS WE'D LIKE TO SEE (Mad 137 Sep 1970) E.C.

GRAPHIC STORY MAIL

Hames Ware
818 West 20th Avenue
Pine Bluff, Arkansas 71601

The WHO'S WHO IN AMERICAN COMIC BOOKS rolls on, thanks in part to your able readers. Many mysteries in my last letter have since been cleared up or shed light on by readers of GRAPHIC STORY MAGAZINE.

And of course many mysteries are being cleared up by the pros themselves as they send in the WHO'S WHO data forms. Albert Feldstein confirmed an earlier Reed Crandall designation of Bill Williams as the RED BEE artist mentioned in my last letter--but not the same Bill Williams who drew humor comics at Dell after the war.

Edd Ashe told us that both his former shop bosses Harry Chesler and Lloyd Jacquet had died. This prompted me to follow my own advice and do as much firsthand research on the shops as one so geographically removed can do.

After a period of Sherlock Holmes-like sleuthing I found S. M. Iger via phone. Suspicious at first, he soon became congenial and agreed to answer my questions about himself and his shop if I wrote them out, which I did, and which he did. In the course of conversation Mr. Iger told me where to reach one of his chief shop artists, Bob Webb. Happy at my good luck, I figured I might as well keep going, so I called Webb and had a wonderful, if expensive, talk with the jovial gentleman, filled with humorous anecdotes and valuable insights into the latter day shops. A brief capsule of Webb's career and present work may be found in Richard Kyle's excellent new newsletter, GRAPHIC STORY WORLD #1.

The WHO'S WHO will have the most complete list of shop personnel ever published. And after its publication, if you think your readers would be interested, some in-depth articles on the comic art shops for GSM m i g h t be forthcoming. Though I agree with Jerry DeFuccio that the assembly line method killed a lot of nice things in the comics, I also feel the shops were a unique enough phenomenon to warrant closer attention.

I'm not too satisfied with my own listing of name examples at the end of my "Name Games" feature. Richard Kyle and Roger Brand have pointed o u t that Basil Berold r e a l l y shouldn't be identified with Lou Fine, and having at last seen some early Fox comics, I of course must agree.

An interesting thing I noticed in the Fox comics is that the name Charles Nicholas also seems meaningless as applying to one individual, since it appears as a byline regardless of the style. What makes it odd is that the Charles Nicholas of Charlton is supposed to have done the BLUE BEETLE feature on which the name appears. Perhaps he originated the feature and the name continued on after he departed. Or, perhaps he, like several others, changed his name. The confusion expands as Charles Cuidera also reputedly drew BLUE BEETLE -- a fact which led to the erroneous conclusion in another fan magazine that Cuidera and Nicholas were the same person. They aren't.

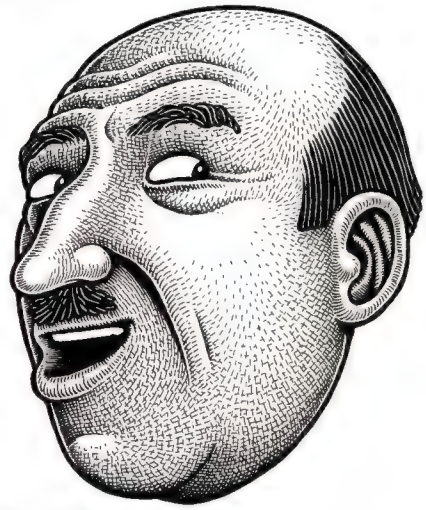
The identity of the RAGGEDY ANN artist at Dell is still in doubt at this writing, but we are close to a conclusion. GSM reader Rex Chessman wrote a note on the subject, concurring with Mike Barrier's feeling that the artist was possibly Henry Valelly. How the signed name "Bing" fits in will have to be seen.

Sal Trapani wrote that he was involved with the artwork on CLASSICS ILLUSTRATED #115, HOW I FOUND LIVINGSTONE. It looks like the whole Charlton art staff of the period also had a hand in it. Still not confirmed are the original art credits on CLASSICS #2, IVANHOE (obviously Jacquet shop -- the question is which artists); #74, MR. MIDSHIPMAN EASY; #83, THE JUNGLE BOOK (some Blum, but mostly someone else); and the artist on "The Tell-tale Heart" story in #84, THE GOLD BUG. We've some clues on all these, but nothing confirmed as yet. This is also true for #132, THE DARK FRIGATE (maybe Heames, maybe not, but definitely an Iger artist) and the re-done art on #54, THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK -- again an Iger artist.

Lou Cameron is proudest of his BOTTLE IMP illustrations for CLASSICS, done with wolf pencil, sprayed with fixative. Cameron was one of the few artists to experiment with different techniques at CLASSICS. Norman Nodel, for whom Cameron gives h i g h e s t praise, was another. Nodel used scratchboard at times.

Cameron, a career soldier and winner of the Purple Heart, had only become a professional cartoonist in 1950 and was becoming one of the field's most interesting artists when the writing bug hit him, and he left the field in 1956.

Sadly, no one has identified the DESERT GOLD Zane Grey comic artwork. It's maddening to see a style so familiar and yet be unable to attach a name to it. Nor has anyone identified the unsigned FAIRY TALE PARADE artist; not Arthur Jameson, but the other one.



Roy Thomas
305 East 86th Street, 18K-West
New York, New York 10028

So even the best fanzines are now going to reprint!

More seriously, I'm glad the Adam Link tale will now receive the wider audience it deserves. If there were more of a market for robot tales in pro comics, I'd have long since tried to get Marvel to do an Adam Link comic -- and won't that probably make the purists (except for Otto Binder, who is considerably brighter) howl with rage.

And I love John Severin's work, no matter what he may say or think about present-day comics. To me, it's enough that he turned out what I personally feel is his best hero-oriented work in many years when he worked with his sister Marie and me on King Kull. The five-page pictorialization of Robert E. Howard's poem "The King and the Oak" is, by all pro accounts, a thing of beauty indeed. I could argue with some of his views on editors, but not in a fanzine. Oh Lord, anywhere but in a fanzine.

It's amateurs like Hames Ware and Jim Harmon, who seem to write much better than they can read, who make me vow from time to time that I'll never waste time and typing paper on a letter to a fanzine.

Ware castigates me (through his use of quotation marks) for calling other people's opinions "wrong" -- yet doesn't seem to notice that it was Jim Harmon who had first begun to use his own value judgments as standards of right and wrong. 'Twas the professional nostalgiast from L. A. who saw something "wrong" with a comics fandom where Kirby was king; where was Mr. Ware's wrath then? Oh well, at least Ware acknowledges Kirby's genius, where-

as Harmon insists upon compounding his lunacy by comparing Will Eisner to D. W. Griffith, and insisting upon a lower place in the pantheon for a man much more important to comic books.

And no, Hames, I don't insist that everyone choose Kirby as his "favorite." As a matter of fact, at various times in my life I myself have preferred Kubert, Toth, Buscema, Kane, Adams, and p e r h a p s another artist or two. In fact, except for the fact that you seem to object to my daring to object to a statement made by an author of Real Books, I suspect we're r a t h e r closer to agreement than you'd imagine.

Jim Harmon is, alas, another matter. He manages to use my name in three sentences in his letter -- and make a fundamental, if minor, error in each and every case. I won't argue about whether or not my remarks were "intemperate," as he claims, since that word means "not moderate," and I see no particular value in excessive moderation per se; however, his words that attempt to summarize my view are inadequate to the task. I hardly said his views were "worthless" because he "[doesn't] appreciate Jack Kirby." I merely maintained that he had grossly undervalued Jack's contribution to comic books. To my mind, he continues to do so when he fails to see Kirby as an artist of Eisner's rank. There is indeed, Jim, a difference between talent and genius -- but what's that got to do with Kirby and Eisner, who both belong, in comic book terms, in the latter class?

The real quarrel I have with Harmon's personal sniping, though, is that he seems to feel (1) that I'm unprepared for him to harbor his own opinion when it disagrees with mine; and (2) that I'll think his opinion "worthless" unless he loved Steranko's HISTORY OF COMICS. Two sentences; two errors. An unbroken track record. First, I hardly mind if he or anyone else agrees or disagrees with me, and I'm under no delusion that anyone in a high school (or fanzine) debate ever convinces anyone else to change his mind about anything important. What Harmon really seems to dislike is that after he deigned to castigate comics fandom for its reverence for Kirby, I deigned to disagree with him. If the letter column of a fanzine isn't the place for one fan to disagree with another, then what is? My remarks were, taken all in all, no more "intemperate" than his own. As for Steranko's book, I happen to share precisely his own misgivings about the work -- plus, ironically enough, the view that it gives Kirby even more credit than is his due. But despite what Jim says, I would fully respect his opinion whether I agreed with it or not.

I suppose that in back of my quarrel with what I feel to be asinine statements made by Ware and Harmon, there lurks a heartfelt disgust with much of what is going down in fanzines today. No one in the comics industry feels that it is living fully up to its potential; many of us would like to aim for adult markets, different markets -- even those of us who enjoy the superhero more than other types of formats. But it has become far, far too easy for snipers to sit in their ivory towers and take verbal potshots at those people who are working their tails off to keep the professional comic book a viable medium. Somehow, unless we desire to live in hovels and produce small circulation underground comics or fanzines -- unless we're prepared to renounce as "establishment" and "irrelevant" an industry w h i c h still brings entertainment to millions of children and adults every year -- unless we are constantly bowing, scraping, and genuflecting to comic books' self-appointed super-critics and to the pretensions of "serious artists" (quote from FUNNYWORLD) -- somehow, unless we do all these damnable things, we're all considered as prostitutes, parasites, no-talents, or worse. Bullshit.

Since there are many analogies today between the theatre and comics, perhaps I could sum up my view best by stating it this way:

Not every playwright is an Albee, a Williams, or a Pinter.

But even a Neal Simon is worth a dozen Walter Kerrs.

Richard Connolly
19 Lagunita Court
Martinez, California 94553

As I write this, I have not yet read past page 1 of GSM #13. I'm totally hung up on this phantom issues of CLASSICS ILLUSTRATED game.

All of the ones listed by both you and Hames Ware are good choices. Particularly, I think, FRANKENSTEIN by Graham Ingels and THE RED BADGE OF COURAGE by Severin and Elder.

If steady sales is a criterion for classic, then my listing of some more contemporary titles should be valid: THE SHORT HAPPY LIFE OF FRANCIS MACOMBER, Hal Foster; CATCH 22, Jack Davis; SIDDHARTHA, Jesse Marsh; NIGHT FLIGHT, John Severin (in black & white); TRIPLANETARY, Jim Steranko; CANDY, Robert Crumb.

Perhaps TRIPLANETARY shouldn't be on this list as its sales, although more or less steady, are actually to a small audience. However, the pure hokum of Doc Smith's super science mingled with Steranko's pseudo-science imagery would be too much fun to pass up.

Crumb's CANDY need not restrict itself to people, but could bound merrily into the funny animal world.

For a kicker, I defy anyone to emerge with an artist for JOHNNY GOT HIS GUN.

As an adjoinder to the above, CLASSICS ILLUSTRATED are true abortions. They could not be less, by definition, for the amount of abridgement that is necessary. One way to avoid these condensed and expurgated versions is to utilize all areas of drama. Understandably the length of most plays is prohibitive, but there are many one-acters for starters: Reed Crandall for Greek classics, Gene Colan for something as contemporary as LeRoi Jones, or even Rick Griffin for some recent mind-blowers. A comic book illustrator can automatically assume the position taken by the director and his cast to transfer any given play to the graphic story page, complete and unexpurgated.

And, as an aside, what teacher could then complain about the students handing in book reports of DRAMA ILLUSTRATED as opposed to CLASSICS ILLUSTRATED?

Continuing the CLASSICS ILLUSTRATED phantom edition possibilities, we received the following...

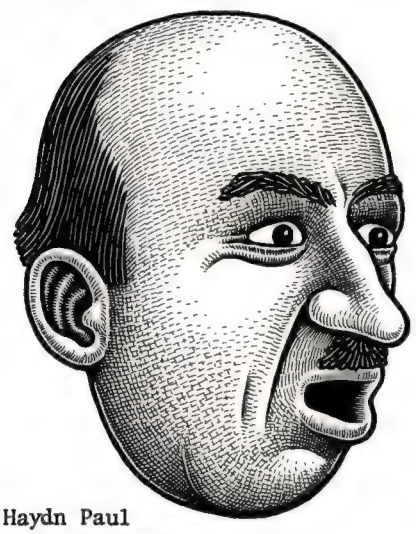
From Dave Bibby: "The would-be CLASSICS ILLUSTRATED is an interesting concept. I can only think of a couple I think would be interesting, albeit they would be 'liberated' editions: I'd like to see Metzger do a version of Burroughs' NAKED LUNCH and Bruce Berry take a shot at THE STORY OF O."

Jean-Pierre Dionnet: "For me the best CLASSICS ILLUSTRATED was THE TIME MACHINE by Lou Cameron, and for the titles that could have been done I see: THE ILIAD, Jack Kirby;

MACBETH, Graham Ingels; JOAN OF ARC, Wally Wood; ROMEO AND JULIET, Sid Check; A CONNECTICUT YANKEE IN KING ARTHUR'S COURT, George Evans; and last but not least, FRANKENSTEIN, Bob Powell."

John C. Wilson: "IVANHOE and THE TALISMAN, Hal Foster; WORLD WAR TWO (THE WORLD AROUND US series), Joe Kubert; WIZARD OF OZ and THE TIME MACHINE, Roy Krenkel; DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE, Graham Ingels; JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH, Al Williamson."

Alan Hewetson: "THE BOTTLE IMP, script by Dennis O'Neil, pencils by Reed Crandall, inks by Frank Frazetta; ALICE IN WONDERLAND, script by Harvey Kurtzman, art by Jack Davis and Will Elder; FRANKENSTEIN, script by me (and properly!), pencils by Syd Shores, inks by John Severin; THE INVISIBLE MAN, scripted and pencilled by Steve Ditko, inks by Wally Wood; THE ENCHANTED FISH, scripted and completely illustrated by Roy Thomas."



Haydn Paul
44 Rugby Road, Hinckley
Leistershire, England

The issue containing the new Metzger strip, "Mal-ig," looks particularly good, and most copies will be sold here through shops. Send fifty of any issue that is available, as a standard order, unless I revise the issues required.

Basically, over here, comic fandom is revising certain of the assumptions and traditions of fan activity. This is probably because we have less of a traditional approach than U. S. fans. Mainly, though, this is reflected in the fan magazines: more are becoming less concerned with comics, and are covering all aspects of graphic art, science fiction, sword & sorcery, contemporary activities, etc. Offhand, I can't think of any solely concerned with comics. In effect they're changing to an "underground" attitude, and many head shops are selling them for us. This puts the emphasis on porn, perversion, politics, poetry, etc. As far as I'm concerned, this is fine -- it is an obvious progression -- but pretty soon some fan mag will get busted for "obscenity." One of my friends has bought his own printing press, and is producing a magazine, "The Crucified Toad," without including his own address, for fear of being prosecuted. If these fanzines get popular -- as they seem to be -- sales will be well over 1,000. And for Great Britain that's incredible!

Even the conventions are radically altered now -- leading members of the underground come along -- and people get busted for possession on their way to the cons, and people sit there passing joints around. It's a very nice scene, in fact. Y'know, I still get the impression that U. S. comics fandom is a juvenile place. I'm not condemning the quality of the fan magazines or the intelligence of the editors, but it seems to be obviously an "escape" for too many of the fans, and few seem to show an awareness of current sociological trends. From over here, one gets the impression that the U. S. will "explode" in the foreseeable future.

Anyway, the current fan magazine scene over here is very interesting, although "fandom" as the U. S. style is seems to be disappearing.

Landon Chesney
210 High Street
Chattanooga, Tennessee 37403

Great cover on #13! I dig the heck out of Berry's robot effects. He can't draw people very well -- they're not animated -- but he shares with Al Feldstein the ability to really endow man-like machines with an uncanny credibility. I recall from the first printing being impressed with the innate difference between Adam and Eve as "male" and "female," and yet it's done in a very subtle manner. There is scarcely any perceptible difference between the two, yet you instinctively pick up on Eve as "female." This is damned good. He must have put a lot of thought into that.

Metzger is so bizarre that I don't really know what to say about his stuff. The thing that bothers me most is the lack of professional finish. You can't immediately place the different planes of the drawing -- which could easily be solved by using a slightly thicker line for modeling the foreground objects and going to increasingly thinner lines as he recedes to the background. This would add immeasurably to being able to "read" the story -- to me, anyway, or maybe I just need glasses.

I had looked forward to the Severin interview for a long time. There were some startling revelations in it. Like Benson, I'd always assumed that Kurtzman had scripted and edited the final three issues of TWO FISTED, and didn't attach any particular significance to Severin's illustrating the whole book. This is understandable when you consider that Severin is as consummate a craftsman as Kurtzman when it comes to authenticity and background detail to build up verisimilitude. And his pacing, his sense of flow, is flawless. The reason, I suppose, is that, like Kurtzman, he is really not so much a comic book man as he is a movie man. He thinks in cinematic terms. One of my biggest disappointments was that he didn't get into this area of his thinking more. But in spite of it all, I'm not a wholehearted Severin fan. I like his style, I admire his ability to tell a story, I've never seen anybody handle the west as well as he does. But his refusal to make that last concession to the medium -- a finished comic style -- has always put me off. He inks in terms of book illustration, a Will James sort of pen style: no modeling, no differentiation between the bolder foreground material and the lighter, less important background stuff. Everything is drawn with equal emphasis. And this last is what is so damnably frustrating, because this is just as important and emphatic a tool in "telling the story," "leading the reader's eye" or what have you, as angles, layouts or composition.

When Bill Elder inks his stuff, it makes for some of the most perfectly rendered comic art I've ever seen. Elder models Severin's figures, uses shadow to make them stand out in relief, brings out the terrain in unmistakable terms. Nobody's battlefields were muddier,

more convincing, more real, than those of Severin and Elder together. There were so many : "Chicken," "War Story," and probably my all time favorite, "Pigs of the Roman Empire," especially memorable because, as many times as Hollywood has depicted Imperial Rome, and blew it, Severin and Elder brought it off in a comic book : in addition to the authentic detail, the characters looked Roman. It surprised me that Severin disclaimed the importance of historical type. I'd always gotten the impression from his stories that people of the 1890s or ancient Rome do, by golly, actually look different from the people of today.

John Benson
207 West 80th Street, #2B
New York, New York 10024

When "Master Tyme and Mobius Tripp" came out, a few people told me they found the story difficult to follow; they felt it was difficult to understand what was going on. This surprised me because I felt that the story, even though it was strange, was very clearly told. With "Mal-ig," however, I'll have to confess a total confusion. There are recurring characters and landscapes; I presume there's a narrative to go along with them, but I can't find it. Here and there I catch deftly executed sequences, but on the whole it might as well be a portfolio of Metzger drawings (albeit very interesting Metzger drawings) for all I can see. I know it's cheating to ask, but can someone explain the story?

At the Comic Convention Gil Kane remarked to me that although GSM is always talking up the visual approach to comics, its first reprint was a long story that depended heavily on text. You'll recall that Kane praised the story (Berry's and your version of "Adam Link's Vengeance") when it first came out. The fact that "countless new readers" have requested the reprinting of this story to the presumed exclusion of the more visually oriented stories GSM has run appeared to be a victory for his text oriented approach to comics over GSM's stated approach.

Sadly, I can only agree with him. I cared little for this version of the story when you first published it, and seeing it again has not changed my opinion. If reprints at this point were to be desired, I would much have preferred to see the Chesney and Overstreet horror stories from the second and third issues. Those three stories, to my mind, were far the most interesting graphic pieces in those early issues of FANTASY ILLUSTRATED.

A passage in the Severin interview was garbled in print which obfuscated the point of the particular point he was making. The passage should have read:

"Now that one illustration might be a day's work for the [illustrator], whereas the comics artist has done I don't know how many illustrations that day. As compositions, any 'one' might, if he's a good comics illustrator, be equal to the other, but you would never compare them because one so completely overrides the other in appearance."

The substitution, in the final text, of "another" for "the other" obscured the fact that Severin was comparing a comic artist's single panel with an illustrator's picture. In such a comparison the comic panel will nearly always lose because the purpose of a comic panel is different from an illustration. Because in comics, as Severin says, what's important is "the series of still pictures that tell a story."

Jim Jones
744 Pomelo Avenue
Vista, California 92083

EVERY TIME I receive the latest GSM I wonder how can the next issue be as good or better -- but it is!! I don't see how you can go on and on producing this FANTASTIC magazine in your spare time -- it's TOO MUCH!!! ALL of this for just a $1.25...the BIGGEST VALUE and for my money THE BEST regularly produced mag for comic art and graphic story fans!! I've even had to start saving the envelopes it comes in... the latest of The Barker and his gang looks like D. Bruce Berry remembering JACK COLE or done by GILL FOX...the guy who did so-o-o many covers for the Quality publications ...seems to me this pic on your mailing envelope was used on the cover or splash page of a BARKER story.

ROBOTS have long been favorites of mine. I was really impressed when reading Part Two of the LINK adaptation in FANTASY ILLUSTRATED #2...remember, even then, back issues of your zines were sell-outs!! I tried to get a copy of FI #1 from you and they were all gone. Fortunately, you gave me the name of a fan in Florida who might have an extra for sale...AND I GOT A COPY OF FI #1!!! It was GREAT to see the whole story reprinted in GSM #13. The impact is GREATER when the entire story is viewed as a whole. LIKED the way you reassembled the elements...the blowup of the last panel on page 27...the repeat of the second to last panel on page 19 to second to last panel on page 27, and the enlargements of the four panels on pages 28 and 29 as opposed to the smaller space used in FI #2...and liked the use of reverse lettering in the two panels on page 29. Even after seven years this LINK adaptation is still GREAT!!! You and BERRY should be rather proud of this effort!! And the FULL COLOR COVER... WOWEE!!! SLAM-BANG! CRUNCH!! EXCITING!!! You remember how GOLD KEY used to reproduce their covers TWICE...once as a cover with type on it...the second time (same issue) as a pin-up on the back cover? WISH you had done this with BERRY'S cover...then I could have framed it!!! For me this cover has EVERYTHING... ACTION, THE BEST USE OF COLOR and TONS OF VISUAL EXCITEMENT... A PERFECT COVER!!! The back cover...BERRY trying to be FINLAY and not quite making it. I'd rather see BERRY being BERRY... which in itself is QUITE SOMETHING!

METZGER'S work is FASCINATING to SEE. The layouts and panel breakdowns are similar to some JAPANESE comic books I picked up about five years ago. The plot is WAY OVER MY HEAD. The story isn't really understood as it's too complex for me. Perhaps it's like the movie 2001... each viewer arrives at what he thinks the point is... or might be.

The only two guys I liked working on SHIELD were SEVERIN and STERANKO. VERY INTERESTING INTERVIEW WITH

JOHN SEVERIN!!!

Dig BOB FOSTER'S stuff...YES!!! I have MYRON MOOSE #1...it's GREAT!!!

As for a couple of the letter writers...YES...YES..IF POSSIBLE, A KIRBY INTERVIEW!!! The title of your magazine is GRAPHIC STORY MAGAZINE. A mag containing GRAPHIC STORIES OR STORIES (INTERVIEWS) about GRAPHIC ARTISTS ... BOTH!!! Maybe, at times, it's not a balance ...SO WHAT!!! As the owner of a copy of every issue of FI and GSM, I FEEL I'VE GOTTEN MUCH MORE than just my money's worth!!!

UNBELIEVABLE, but it looks like #14 might be better than the first WOLVERTON issue!!! LET'S SEE IT!!! WOOW!!! (New, inflationary way of spelling WOW.)

Robert E. Butts
718 East 9th Street, #4
Bloomington, Indiana 47401

"Adam Link's Vengeance" and "Malig" provided an interesting contrast in both values and deficiencies. Others can testify to their values better than I, so let me touch on one glaring deficiency: probably because "Vengeance" is so well written, there is a tendency to lean too heavily on word balloons and dialogue. I'm beginning to believe that your and Bruce Berry's efforts made a good graphic story out of what was a better short story. This is not to sell those efforts short. It is precisely my acknowledging them that leads to no other conclusion but the unsuitability of the story to account for its wordiness.

I found myself on several occasions skimming from panel to panel without so much as a glance at the graphics, which can be accounted for in two ways: 1) as stated above or 2) the quality of the visual continuity was better, not worse, than I first thought; it struck straight at the subconscious, with transitions so smooth I wasn't aware of making them.

If 2 is true, it brings up a knotty problem. The beauty and the force of the graphic story is in the transition from panel to panel; without it, there's no graphic story, it's something else. So the question is, do we ever want to be so good at continuity that the reader becomes unaware of the transitions and the relationships between pictures and words?

As a partial answer to that I can only admit that it is done every day in television and movies. Who really knows enough about camera angles, blocking, lenses, s h o t techniques and editing to understand why a particular TV or movie sequence is good? And this lack of knowledge, needless to say, does not detract from whatever enjoyment we get out of films and television. But does an additional knowledge bring with it additional enjoyment? I submit that it does. So when the creativity of an individual work negates that knowledge, what the individual creation gains the specific medium loses.

George Metzger, I think, has learned that lesson a little too well. One becomes so involved in his intricate panels, with all their detail, that finishing the story (and sometimes I wonder if there is one) leaves the reader -- this reader -- empty.

I wish he would learn that graphic stories are not designed to be poured over like laboratory specimens or fragments of old parchment, at least not on first reading. And it seems a truism to say that whatever message there is to a story, a notion of it should be evident at first reading. With his stories, I pour over them with a magnifying glass and maybe I glean the gist of it. Usually not.

I'm no artist by anyone's stretch of the imagination, but it doesn't take one to know he could get by with half of the lines he uses. Without an easily identifiable subject, all the nuances and experimentation he adds to his panels goes for nought. Metzger's trying to put castles on foundations designed for card houses. In three words, he's overdoing it. I'll let the subject rest with that.

The Severin interview was hilarious. It has convinced me that Severin the man is considerably more interesting than his work. His absent-mindedness, his cynicism, and mercenary attitude toward his work made for very entertaining reading. Unlike some people we know, John Severin made one point perfectly clear: he's a pro. Nothing more, nothing less. He couldn't have made it any clearer without tattooing "I'm a PRO" on his forehead. Come to think of it, that's just about what he did. And that's all you really have to say about the man, except maybe -- right on!

Fred Schreiber
3299 Cambridge Avenue, #4D
Bronx, New York 10463

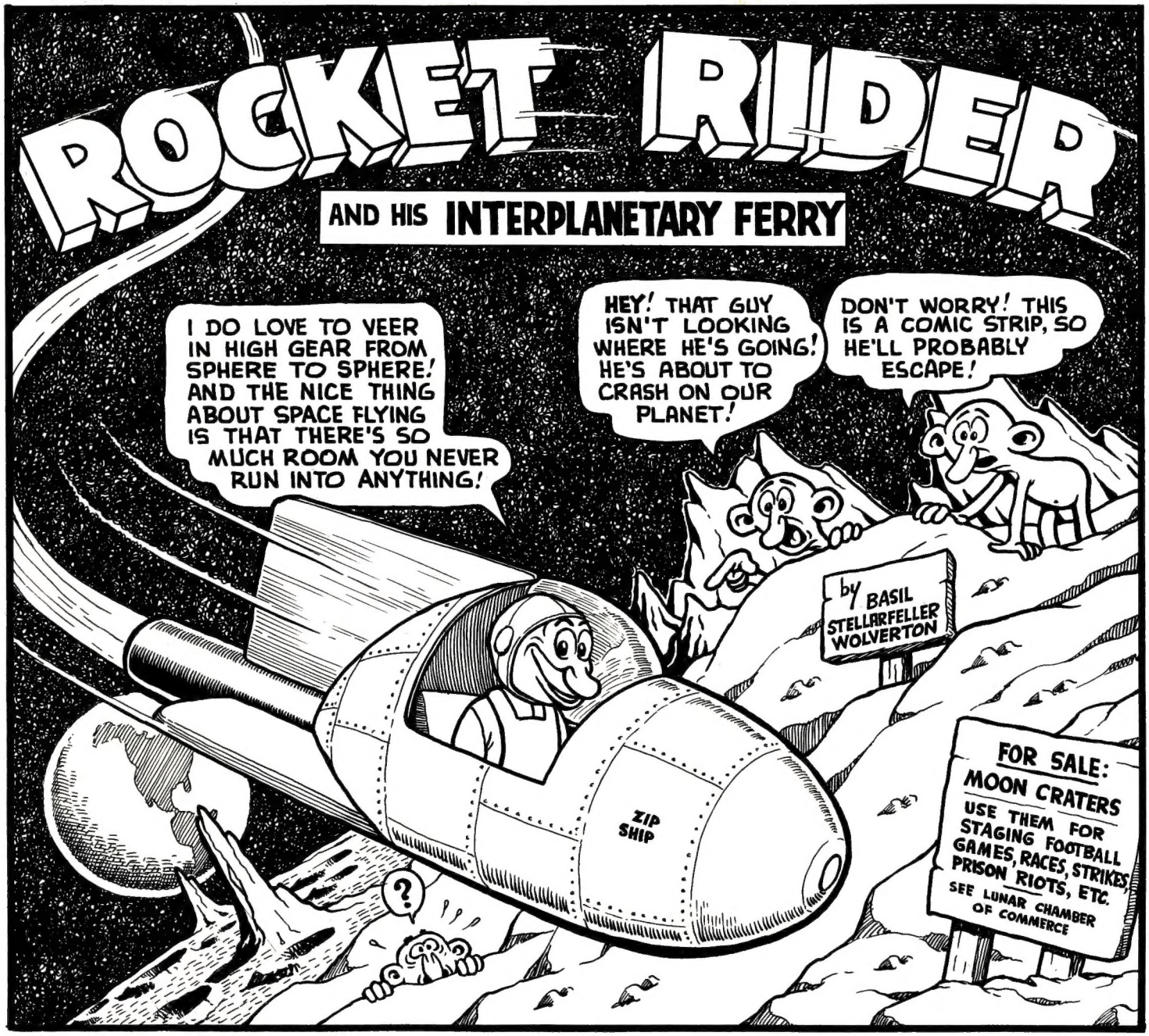
I rarely take time out to write a complimentary note to any fanzine; most of the stuff around just does not seem to call for serious comment, let alone praise. Since it all began, I have seen only two or three examples of what I personally consider topnotch material -- paradoxically enough, most of it from Europe.

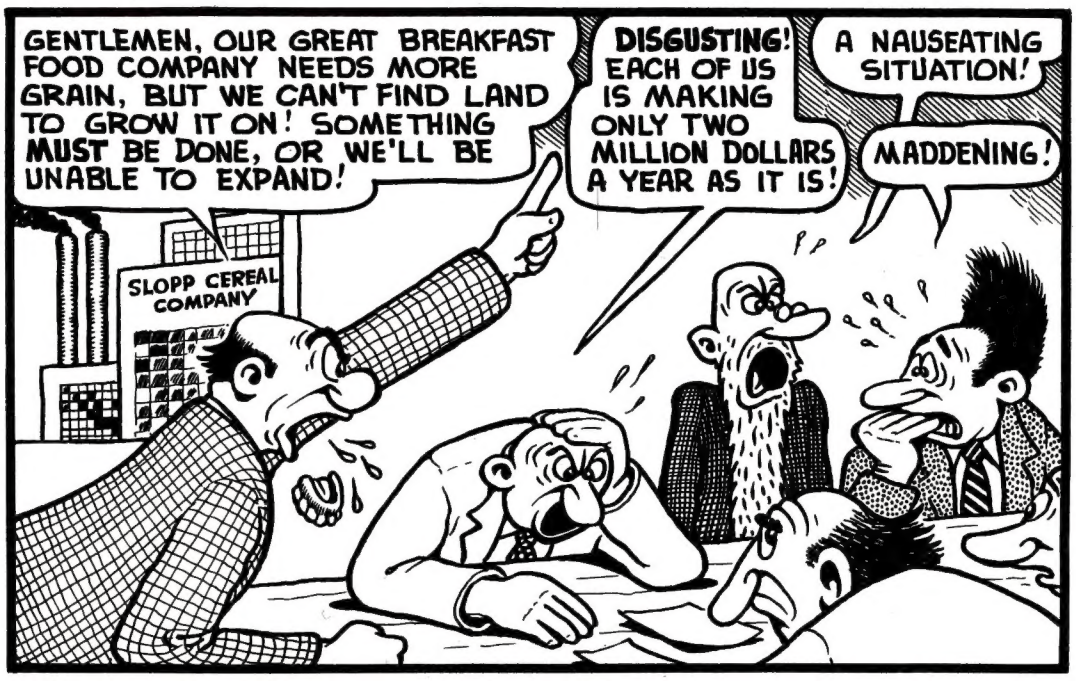
But your Will Gould issue, #11, was unquestionably the finest issue of any fanzine I have ever had the pleasure to read. You literally brought back Will Gould from the dead -- indeed, I couldn't have been the only one who was misled into believing that his demise took place simultaneously with that of RED BARRY, back in them Golden Days.

I for one have always thought it a darn shame that American fandom lagged so far behind the French and Italian in the critical appraisal of its own graphic geniuses. Anyone who has ever looked at an issue of GIFF-WIFF or PHENIX cannot help but acknowledge that, where American comic strips are concerned, the Europeans can discuss and praise them with much more "soul" than we.

Are the French and Italians the only ones who can write about Foster, Raymond or Hogarth in anything but a superficial, fly - by - night manner? Poor Hogarth, who, neglected by Waugh and Becker, had to wait for Couperie et Cie. to proclaim his genius to the world! Are the Europeans the only ones who remember such talents as Will Gould, Frank Godwin (not a peep about him from Waugh and Becker), Frank Miller, etc.?

Your Will Gould interview proves that this is no longer the case. America is finally catching up.


ROCKET RIDER
AND HIS INTERPLANETARY FERRY
I DO LOVE TO VEER IN HIGH GEAR FROM SPHERE TO SPHERE! AND THE NICE THING ABOUT SPACE FLYING IS THAT THERE'S SO MUCH ROOM YOU NEVER RUN INTO ANYTHING!
HEY! THAT GUY ISN'T LOOKING WHERE HE'S GOING! HE'S ABOUT TO CRASH ON OUR PLANET!
DON'T WORRY! THIS IS A COMIC STRIP, SO HE'LL PROBABLY ESCAPE!
by BASIL STELLARFELLER WOLVERTON
ZIP SHIP
?
FOR SALE:
MOON CRATERS
USE THEM FOR STAGING FOOTBALL GAMES, RACES, STRIKES, PRISON RIOTS, ETC.
SEE LUNAR CHAMBER OF COMMERCE


GENTLEMEN, OUR GREAT BREAKFAST FOOD COMPANY NEEDS MORE GRAIN, BUT WE CAN'T FIND LAND TO GROW IT ON! SOMETHING MUST BE DONE, OR WE'LL BE UNABLE TO EXPAND!
DISGUSTING! EACH OF US IS MAKING ONLY TWO MILLION DOLLARS A YEAR AS IT IS!
A NAUSEATING SITUATION!
MADDENING!
SLOPP CEREAL COMPANY

PRESIDENT OATBLOAT, I HAVE A COLOSSAL IDEA! LET'S PLANT GRAIN ON SOME OTHER PLANET WHERE THERE'S PLENTY OF LAND!

BASIL
WOLVERTON